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Earth Summit: A vision on shared

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Exclusive interview with Jean-Claude Faby

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Earth Summit

The Earth Summit: A vision shared

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) is unprecedented not only in its size; it also addresses a staggering range of issues, including uncharted environmental problems and uncertain economic, demographic and social trends that affect development. On the eve of the Earth Summit, the agreements that have been hammered out in over two years of preparatory negotiations are still taking shape. There is no doubt, however, that UNCED has placed the issue of sustainable development at the top of the international agenda. Jean-Claude Faby, who as director of the New York office of the UNCED secretariat has been intimately involved in the negotiations, talks with Development Forum *deputy editor Paul Heath Hoeffel about what we can realistically expect from Rio and beyond.*

An interview with Jean-Claude Faby

Development Forum: *UNCED has encouraged participation by many players in addition to governments. How has this worked out?*

Jean-Claude Faby: Compared to Stockholm (Conference on the Human Environment in 1972), there has been enormous non-governmental participation. Women, youth, the private sector, labour, science, indigenous people all have contributed their ideas and have been allowed to participate in preparatory meetings.

This is important because it has mobilized interest throughout the world, making the entire process more democratic and participatory.

Sustainable development is not only a matter of negotiation among governments, it's a matter of people taking their fate in their hands, recognizing that the average citizen worldwide needs to adopt a very different mind-set regarding the environment and economic development.

DF: *The NGOs have also been UNCED's strongest critics. Many finished PrepCom IV negotiations concerned that the overall effort would be a failure.*

Faby: Their critical assessment reflects in a way a healthy impatience. However, the complexity of the UNCED agenda, and the stakes involved, would hardly permit, in two and a half years of preparations, resolving everything to everyone's satisfaction. Let us not forget, after all, that we are dealing here with just about every environment and development problem that the world community has grappled with over the past quarter century and that some of these problems, such as climate change and ozone depletion, are very new. In addition, the aim of the conference is to highlight the linkages existing between environment and development issues, for example, the relationships between, say, biodiversity, forests, oceans and, in turn, their linkages to trade, poverty, demographic

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Developing Countries

Richard B. Mock

Welcome to Rio

By Marcello Montenegro

As all eyes turn to Rio, the Earth Summit is not the only focal point. Brazil, which extended an open invitation to the world two years ago, has also opened itself up to intense outside scrutiny of its environment and development policies. As one of the advanced developing countries with enormous economic, social and ecological problems, this vast South American nation is a living case study of the challenges facing Earth Summit participants.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's host city for the major events of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), has opened its doors to welcome—with great, and often last-minute, organizational efforts—official government delegations as well as non-governmental and media representatives arriving from all over the world.

To accommodate its guests, Rio, fighting a growing reputation for being overcrowded, dirty and dangerous, is being given a facelift. For example, the city's logistical resources are being modified to handle the sudden influx of demanding people—from enlarging the facilities of its international airport to installing high-tech computers in its historic Botanical Garden.

Several kilometres of expressway have been added to Rio's beltway to ease travel from the airport to the hotel zone and from there to the meeting area. Even the direction of some of the one-way streets and avenues is being reversed.

But preparing for UNCED has not only altered the logic of Rio streets. It has also prompted the surprising collaboration of Brazilian president Fernando Collor de Melo and the governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro, Leonel Brizola, bitter

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Women

Women demand a new world order

By Jocelyn Dow

Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.

—Rio Declaration principle 20

As a woman who has closely watched the UNCED process approach its Summit, two images remain with me: one, tinged with triumph, was the moment when the delegate of the Holy See rose to his feet during PrepCom IV to say that he had no objection to paragraph g6 in the Women's document; and the other, sadly, when a delegate from the Caribbean, upon being asked to sponsor an amendment on behalf of the Women's Caucus, responded, "I am yet to understand what women have to do with development."

As I reflect on these two moments, I cannot help but be overwhelmed by the gulf that exists between official process and the reality of the lives for which we have all spoken. Still, there is real hope that the effort and expectations that have gone into the negotiations during the preparatory meetings for the agreements to be signed in Rio will make a difference for these lives. So much is at stake, especially for women.

But what will happen if the Rio Declaration fails to convey the message of a new world order that will deal justly with women? If it does not incorporate and integrate the vision and knowledge of women? If Agenda 21 fails to offer the resources and mechanisms to bring women's energies, representing more than half of the world's population, into the planning, decision-making and implementation of this new plan of action?

We have acknowledged during recent months that the way in which the world is now organized does violence to all life and to the Earth itself. We know that poverty and misery are increasing among women and children in much of the world.
We know that the life signs of the planet, our Earth, water and air, are daily more imperilled.

We also know that the *laissez-faire* economic policies, increasingly pursued by international financial institutions, are often abusive and destructive. We have created structures in and out of government that are responsible to no one, that glorify profit above life. We are engaged in the creation of life forms and systems that mock nature's wisdom. And in spite of the list of horrors and failures that our technologies have often wrought, some continue to believe that man can dominate nature without dire consequences.

A women's agenda

Women, united by our "otherness" to these systems, have evolved in a long process that now includes the experience of the Earth Summit. After consultations with women around the world, we have sought to interject our

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Earth Summit at a glance

The Earth Summit—the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)—is taking place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992.

The meeting marks the culmination of a series of intensive consultations, preparatory meetings and intergovernmental negotiations that have taken place over the past two years. The last PrepCom, which took place at United Nations headquarters in New York throughout March, sought to outline the basic areas of concern that the international community can agree on or will continue to negotiate on through to the enormous gathering in Rio.

"The primary goal of the Summit will be to lay the foundation for a global partnership between developing and industrialized countries, based on mutual need and common interests, to ensure the future of the planet," states Maurice Strong, secretary-general of the conference. "We need to find a viable and equitable balance between environment and development."

A highlight of the conference will be the observance of World Environment Day on 5 June, the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972.

It was in Stockholm that environment was formally placed on the international agenda. The Brazil Summit now aims to ensure that the issue becomes central to policy-making and implementation in almost every sector of economic life. It seeks agreement on concrete measures to reconcile economic activities with the need to protect the planet and ensure a sustainable future for all peoples.

Together, government delegations, international organizations, non-governmental groups and private-sector interests are a part of an unprecedented attempt to mobilize people to set a new and more hopeful course for the future of humanity. Although the official conference will be attended by delegations represented at the level of heads of state or of governments, NGOs have played an unprecedentedly large role during the preparatory process and have organized the '92 Global Forum, a series of parallel events in Rio.

Robin Jareaux

Since the relationship between economic development and environmental impact was recognized at the Stockholm conference, little has been done, in practical terms, to integrate concerns for development and the environment in economic planning and decision-making at the local, national and international levels. Meanwhile, the overall environment of the planet has dramatically deteriorated.

Spurred in part by the 1987 report of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*, the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 called for a conference that would take steps to reverse trends and establish the basis for a sustainable way of life on the planet as we move into the twenty-first century.

The issues at stake

In an effort to maintain the quality of the environment and achieve environmentally sound, sustainable development in all countries, the conference will address:

* protection of the atmosphere, climate change, depletion of the ozone layer, transboundary air pollution;
* protection of land resources combating deforestation, soil loss, desertification and drought;
* conservation of biological diversity;
* protection of freshwater resources;
* protection of oceans, seas and coastal areas, and the rational use of their living resources;
* environmentally sound management of biotechnology and hazardous wastes;
* prevention of illegal traffic in toxic products and wastes;
* improvement in the quality of life and human health;
* improvement in living and working conditions of the poor by eradicating poverty and stopping environmental degradation.

The conference is focusing on underlying patterns of present development policies which cause stress to the environment. Poverty in developing countries, levels of economic growth, unsustainable patterns of consumption, demographic pressure and the impact of the international economy will be addressed as part of the above-mentioned issues.

Earth Summit objectives

The conference is expected to produce:

* a Rio Declaration on Environment and Development that will embody basic principles which must govern the economic and environmental behaviour of peoples and nations to ensure "our common future" (*see below*);
* Agenda 21, a blueprint for action in all major areas affecting the relationship between the environment and the economy. It will focus on the period up to the year 2000 and extend into the twenty-first century;
* the means to carry out the agenda by making available to developing countries the additional financial resources and environmentally sound technologies they require to participate fully in global environmental co-operation and to integrate environmental considerations into development policies and practices;
* agreement on strengthening institutions in order to implement these measures, particularly within the United Nations system;
* conventions on climate change and biological diversity. These are being negotiated separately from conference preparations with the optimistic aim of having them ready for signature in Rio. ■

Rio Declaration on Environment and Development

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

Having met at Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992,

Reaffirming the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, adopted at Stockholm on 16 June 1972, and seeking to build upon it,

With the goal of establishing a new and equitable global partnership through the creation of new levels of co-operation among states, key sectors of societies and people,

Working towards international agreements which respect the interests of all and protect the integrity of the global environmental and developmental system,

Recognizing the integral and interdependent nature of the Earth, our home,

Proclaims that:

Principle 1

Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.

Continued on following pages

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A vision shared

An interview with Jean-Claude Faby

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pressures, etc. The conference also had to identify means of implementation for Agenda 21; these cover financing, technologies and institutions which represent by themselves a very complex set of issues. NGOs have to recognize that negotiating such a package is a very difficult and time-consuming exercise.

Of course, when it comes to formulating documents for a United Nations conference, it is impossible to give NGOs the same status as the governments, which have the final word in negotiations. Nevertheless, women, for example, were extremely active in the preparatory process, particularly as it relates to women. In our preparations as a secretariat, women contributed extensively to the documentation and later in the PrepCom negotiations, where they were able to speak directly to governments. As a result, women are seen as a major group throughout Agenda 21. Their inputs are clearly reflected.

DF: *Was it difficult to get the business community enthusiastic about UNCED?*

Faby: Business is obviously a key player in the world economy and, by extension, in development and environment. The quandary for us at the United Nations was how to involve the private sector in the UNCED process positively and productively. We decided to challenge them to make their own assessment of what they have been doing right, what wrong. They realize that it is in their interest to participate and have been quite forthcoming. UNCED touches on many issues that will profoundly affect the way business is conducted.

DF: *The North-South split has dominated the negotiations from the very beginning. One NGO spokesperson commented that the poor countries are saying to the North, "We have the right to live at the same level as you do, and you can choose what it will be." This is a pretty striking view of things. Is the vision beginning to be shared among governments?*

Faby: The global context of UNCED has been a very difficult one, economically and politically. The end of the Cold War raised our hopes, but regional conflicts have arisen, economic conditions have created a new climate of uncertainty not conducive to quiet negotiations. Conversely, these changes have brought to the world a real sense of interdependence and given the developing countries key cards in the game of international negotiations. They are not just asking for assistance, but have a strong role to play in solving their problems with the North, and therefore have strong arguments for demanding compensation for whatever impediments may be placed on their development.

UNCED is trying to replace the East-West problem on the agenda with a new economic, social and environmental partnership between North and South. We have engaged North and South in a discussion that may yield a platform of agreement and good faith of governments in Rio and after.

DF: *The Rio Declaration is certainly a good start, but will the principle be further negotiated?*

Faby: The fact that the Rio Declaration has been transmitted by the PrepCom to the conference without brackets reflects a positive attitude on the part of the governments. The document is a significant achievement and reflects a balance between principles of interest to the North and others of interest to the South. However, several governments have stated that they continue to have reservations about some elements contained in it.

The Rio Declaration as it now stands is somewhat different from the concept of an Earth Charter, which had been proposed initially. The Declaration looks more like a kind of introduction to Agenda 21, whereas the Earth Charter was originally conceived as a brief document couched in higher political/philosophical language. We expect a number of the principles contained in the Declaration to be reopened in Rio.

DF: *Agenda 21, the action plan, goes to Rio with a lot to be resolved. What will happen in those final days of negotiations?*

Faby: We have cleaned up about 95 per cent of this 800-page document, but there are politically delicate negotiations ahead in Rio. Some continue as we speak.

The chapter on atmosphere is entirely in brackets, for example, because it was felt that they could not agree on this while the convention on climate change was still being negotiated. As soon as that convention is completed, possibly by mid-May, then that agreement would serve to close the deal on the Agenda 21 chapter.

DF: *There are a number of issues that governments in North and South have avoided—military spending, commitment to finances, population, lifestyle. Is this realistic?*

Faby: Some issues, military activities, for example, are not dealt with. Early on in 1989 the Western group made it clear that this would not be a subject for negotiation under UNCED. NGOs in particular have been very vocal in raising the issue of military spending and its negative impact on the environment and development. In the post-UNCED period it is a subject that must be dealt with.

DF: *The controversial issues of population and consumption patterns have been juxtaposed in UNCED negotiations. Do you think new understandings of their relationship have emerged?*

Faby: A balance has been found in negotiations revolving around that complex issue. There is a quantitative aspect. I believe there is language to the effect that for every 10,000 people born, 9,000 are in developing countries. On the other hand, those 1,000 babies born in the Northern countries will consume three to four times as much of the world's resources as the 9,000 born in the developing world. These are striking figures.

This is where the point of consumption patterns of the North comes into play. You cannot look simply at sheer numbers in the South; you have to consider the North as well for the pressure it places on natural resources of the planet. The issue of consumption and production patterns was the subject of sharp debate at PrepCom. The language that will come out will reflect considerable compromise, but it will be there. It has found a balance in UNCED.

DF: *Governments are reluctant to talk money, but Maurice Strong did announce that the secretariat had calculated that roughly $125 billion would be needed each year to implement Agenda 21. What can we realistically expect?*

Faby: That figure is not a budget but an estimate for the international concessional financing needed for developing countries and is only a fifth of what would be required to fully implement Agenda 21. In other words, the developing countries will have to generate four times as much as the concessional package.

And that's not as big as it sounds. If the old United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of official development assistance (ODA) were achieved, then we would have $110 billion right there. As it stands, the average ODA is only 0.35 per cent or $55 billion in assistance from North to South. Northern governments have a mixed record on their commitments, and the higher target may not yet be feasible.

What we can count on, however, is a basket of vehicles for additional funds, of which ODA is only one. The International Development Association, which provides concessional funding through the World Bank, and the regional development banks may make new money available. The Global Environment Facility, once questions regarding its governance and mandate are resolved, has at least $1.3 billion to put towards sustainable development over the next few years.

I don't think it's likely that we are going to have a neat package of funding after Rio. It is difficult to speculate on what will finally emerge from Rio on the financial issue. Post Rio, it will be important to identify those elements of Agenda 21 which will require immediate financing—at least $5 to 10 million—and implementation over the next two years. This is one of the principal tasks which the intergovernmental follow-up of Rio will have to deal with.

DF: *What is the likely institutional follow-up to Rio? Who will oversee the intergovernmental work?*

Faby: There are now two options, though the question may not be resolved at the Summit itself. The majority of governments favour option one, a Sustainable Development Commission. Option two, favoured by those governments which do not wish to see a new institution created, would give the responsibility to a revitalized Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The Commision could be modelled after the United Nations Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) simply because CPC is one of the rare organs jointly responsible to both ECOSOC (for co-ordination purposes) and the General Assembly (for policy guidance). The final decision might have to be made in the General Assembly.

DF: *How will the United Nations system fit into the follow-up?*

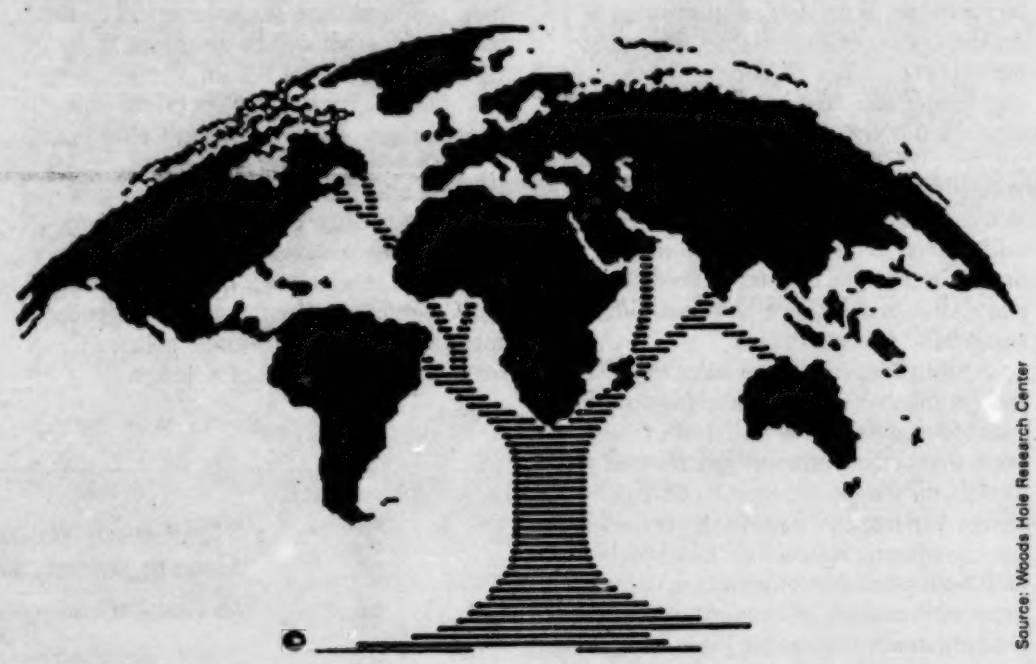
Faby: It would be naive to think that an UNCED secretariat will carry out Agenda 21 by itself; it must be carried out by the system as a whole. We have had great support from the United Nations agencies preparing for Rio. It is only logical that implementation will be carried out by FAO, for example, in the area of sustainable agriculture, health by WHO, atmosphere by WMO and UNEP, not by a small secretariat like ours. The main function of the sustainable development secretariat would be to act as a catalyst, a co-ordinator and a facilitator. Everyone—governments, NGOs, local communities—have a stake and a role in sustainable development. The role of the United Nations system will be important, but with its resources as they are, the rest of the world is going to have a more important role.

DF: *What do you think is the most striking progress that has been made over the past two years?*

Faby: For one, it has become clear that people want an active role in the determination of their environment and development future and that governments alone will not be left with that responsibility. The extraordinary mobilization and organization of people which has taken place during the course of the preparations for Rio is a clear indication of this trend.

There is also increasing doubt that the current system of international relations is capable of fostering the kind of changes needed for sustainable development; one positive element in this respect is the trend to look for increasing co-operation among nations as a better vehicle to serve their interests than a strict adherence to the concept of national sovereignty; it is also good news to see that the United Nations is increasingly looked upon as a place where the international community can foster such co-operation.

I think UNCED has been, in a way, a laboratory and learning experience and we have done rather well in exploring new territory and coming up with solutions to new problems. ■



Source: Woods Hole Research Center

Welcome to Rio

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political and ideological adversaries, who together are summoning the political will and financial resources to ensure UNCED's success.

Deteriorating backdrop

Flamingo Park, the venue of most of the 85 events and almost 300 meetings of the parallel non-governmental organization (NGO) conference, and a classic landscaping conception of Brazilian architect Burle Marx, is built on oceanfront landfill in one of the most beautiful spots of the Bay of Guanabara. "The participants, looking toward the beach, toward the bay or to Sugarloaf, can see what Rio de Janeiro is," says Tony Gross, one of the co-ordinators of the '92 Global Forum, which represents the Brazilian NGOs at the meeting. "The beauty of this setting is being overwhelmed by the devastation it has suffered in the past 30 or 40 years."

The devastation caused by pollution, crowding and poverty, of course, applies not only to Rio but to many developing countries which have had to cope with burgeoning populations, unplanned urbanization and *laissez-faire* exploitation of their lands, waters and forests.

The overreliance on foreign technologies—the intensive use of fertilizers and pesticides, a reliance on petroleum, large investments to develop nuclear energy—have also produced a great waste of the country's environmental potential and contributed to the degradation of its ecosystems.

Like many former European colonies, modern Brazil still maintains the way of life which destroyed the indigenous cultures and encourages a get-rich-quick approach to the exploitation of the country's vast and valuable resources of rubber, hardwoods, wildlife, gold and other minerals.

Consumption: the driving force

In recent decades, consumption has become the driving force behind the country's development, the motor for economic growth, and the chief preoccupation of the government. It is a mind-set that, as the world is finding out, is very hard to give up.

During this time, Brazilians have managed to build the eighth largest economy in the world, while creating social inequalities comparable to those of the world's most backward countries.

In addition, loans provided by Northern commercial banks have financed enormous infrastructural projects, while development banks helped fund highway and dam projects in some of the most ecologically fragile areas of the country.

Richard B. Mock

When Brazil's foreign debt grew so large that the country was unable to meet its payments, it intensified its policies of reckless resource exploitation to generate the export earnings needed for debt servicing. Inequitable land ownership and an ill-conceived policy of "development" of virgin territories sparked the invasion of the Amazon by millions of poor peasants in search of land and gold. This heedless cycle only served to increase poverty and the degradation of the country's ecological patrimony, undermining any possibility of sustainable development.

Still, Brazilians have taken creative and courageous steps to move towards sustainable models. Some of Brazil's cities boast mass transportation systems that are models for the world; Brazil's alternative energy experiments have been very effective in reducing reliance on fossil fuels; ambitious plans for reforestation of hundreds of thousands of hectares of damaged land are under way, as are plans to set aside enormous tracts of land in the Amazon for the protection of indigenous people, an official government priority. All of these projects require massive capital investments.

For all these reasons, the problems of sustainable development in Brazil, as in other countries of the Third World, cannot be considered apart from the complex of relations between the industrialized North and the underdeveloped South, which has become the axis of UNCED negotiations. Brazil is determined to take a central role in the negotiations.

Biodiversity convention

The planetary environmental crisis that has been symbolized by the burning forests and muddy gold mines of the Amazon may provoke changes that otherwise would have been unthinkable in Brazil. It is in the urgent need for sustainable development models that many Brazilians—politicians, academics and environmentalists—hope that co-operative solutions will be adopted on key issues such as biodiversity and other subjects that will be discussed at the conference.

Ennic Candiotti, president of the Brazilian Society for Scientific Progress, is preoccupied with the implications of the biodiversity convention, which is expected to be agreed to by governments in Rio.

"The question of who owns biodiversity is central," he explained in a recent interview. "The answer is not to give the advantage to those who have the capacity for manipulation or to ignore the countries where that wealth is originally found, and which bear extremely high costs to preserve it. The original species are as important as the improved species."

It cannot be said, however, that Brazil's ecologically most conscious and active groups have succeeded in unifying their positions with the government on the major topics that will be discussed at UNCED and Global Forum.

On the contrary, except on the indigenous issue, where president Collor has appointed Sidney Possuelo, an old "backlander" (from the northeastern Sertão region), to head a government agency to deal with the Amazonian Indians and has designated reserves of 9 million hectares of rainforest for the Yanomamis, the agenda appears to favour short-range policies likely to produce more of a "green" effect than real solutions.

The topic of deforestation, for example, has generated heated controversy. The numbers presented by the government, taken from satellite photographs processed by INPE (Space Research Institute), show that 8 per cent of the vegetation covering of the Brazilian Amazon forest has been cut down.

Other data indicate that that figure could be much higher. The Brazilian geographer Orlando Valverde, who has been studying the rainforest for 25 years, maintains that beneath the treetops photographed by satellites there are enormous areas of "disturbed forests", where hardwoods have been cut and now only weeds and bushes grow, unable to support the previous wealth of biodiversity.

Sustainable development in Brazil, as in other Third World countries, cannot be considered apart from relations between North and South, the axis of UNCED negotiations.

The long-range solutions to the problems of Brazilian development, despite their urgency, remain to be proposed. Of the items which came out most recently regarding Brazil's preparatory negotiations for UNCED, the government made it clear that its delegation will reject the plans for international monitoring of Amazonia and will oppose the adoption of any measure that might cast doubt on Brazil's sovereignty over its territory and wealth. The Brazilian negotiators, in turn, demand a place at the table of those who will decide what will be done with the special funds for the environment that may be established by UNCED. ■

Marcello Montenegro is deputy chief editor of Cuadernos del Tercer Mundo, *Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.*

Rio Declaration

Principle 2

States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other states or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

Principle 3

The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.

New Titles

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by Rodolfo Stavenhagen

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After Rio, no turning back

By Michael McCoy

Whatever doubts plague the thousands of government delegates, NGO representatives and activists and members of the media as they head for the Earth Summit, they can rest assured that the political and economic landscape regarding the sustainability of this planet will never be the same after Rio. For no matter what happens during the two weeks of the Earth Summit—and there is real concern that all the separate parts of the agenda may not fall together by the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)—the idea of sustainable development has now reached the top of the international community's agenda, alongside such traditional preoccupations as trade, security and finance. As such, it is now an issue that cannot easily be dismissed without grave political risks to the governments, business interests or whoever else may wish to back away from the new commitments sustainability requires.

The Earth Summit symbolizes official recognition that environmental sustainability is inseparable from economic development and must be part of policy-making at all levels.

The Earth Summit symbolizes official recognition that environmental sustainability is inseparable from economic development and must be part of policy-making at all levels, from villages through to national governments and international organizations.

Similarly, the arduous process leading up to UNCED has vindicated the long-held views and experience of many NGOs, women and indigenous people whose wisdom about genuine sustainable development was always viewed by the "mainstream" as being on the fringe. The grim results of unsustainable economic development worldwide has now brought these "fringe perspectives" to centre stage, demanding the full attention of politicians, diplomats and United Nations system professionals.

So what can be expected from this premier performance? On the eve of the Earth Summit, the betting is that the meeting will neither be a spectacular failure of governments and the United Nations system, as predicted by much of the media, nor the most important meeting of this millennium. It will undoubtedly be a historic and ground-breaking United Nations conference, but a United Nations conference none the less, with all its bureaucratic limitations, problems and pitfalls. That became evident at the marathon fourth session of the UNCED Preparatory Committee in New York held throughout the month of March, at which the negotiations by government delegations defined what would be accomplished in Rio.

PrepCom IV

That final session of the UNCED Preparatory Committee concluded on 4 April with a "clean" draft text of the much debated Rio Declaration on Environment and Development *(see related story on page 9)*. As for progress on the rest of the overloaded agenda for the Earth Summit, it was, as one seasoned NGO observer termed it, "a bit of a dog's breakfast".

The successes included the unbracketed (undisputed) draft text of the Rio Declaration, an agreement on 11 of the 27 chapters of Agenda 21, the post-Summit action plan and an optimistic text outlining the possible institutional mechanisms after Rio.

Richard B. Mock

Key items which PrepCom IV left for the senior negotiating teams to finalize in Rio include new and additional financial resources to assure sustainable development, as well as the sections on forests, transfer of technology, trade and the environment. Negotiations on the major conventions on climate change and biodiversity, held parallel to the UNCED process, were also unable to achieve significant breakthroughs.

Polluters pay

Several ground-breaking concepts are included among the 27 principles of the draft Rio Declaration, not all of which will necessarily survive the final round of negotiations in Rio. The "polluter pays" principle (No. 16), for example, states that "national authorities should endeavour to promote the internalization of environmental costs and the use of economic instruments, taking into account the approach that the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution, with due regard to the public interest and without distorting international trade and investment."

Another principle (No. 13) calls for governments to "develop national law regarding liability and compensation for victims of pollution and other environmental damage". And one says "the special situation and needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed and those most environmentally vulnerable, shall be given special priority" (No. 6).

Agenda 21

The comprehensive plan of action, which extends into the twenty-first century, covers all the areas at the intersection of environment and the economy, including freshwater resources, traffic in toxic wastes, eradicating poverty, environmentally sound management of biotechnology and hazardous wastes, sustainable agriculture, transboundary pollution, etc. The subjects covered in the 11 chapters that were approved include protection of the oceans and coastal areas, strengthening the roles of major groups (among them NGOs, women, youth and indigenous people) and combating deforestation. The other 16 chapters remain to be approved in Rio.

Who does the work?

The 750-page Agenda 21 plan of action *(see related article on page 10)*, of course, requires some kind of institutional mechanisms to carry on the work of UNCED after Rio. Along with finances, this is one of the most difficult issues of the Earth Summit. It was agreed that implementation should be "consistent with the principles of universality, democracy, transparency, cost-effectiveness and accountability". The institutions document goes on to call for a strong secretariat support structure that is gender-balanced and recognizes the need for the optimum use of existing resources.

However, at this point in the final "institutions" negotiations, the debate is whether to have a sustainable development commission along the lines of the Human Rights Commission, which has a great deal of relative independence and clout and has historically provided direct access for NGOs, or a weaker committee that would have a lower profile, meet only occasionally and have a much less empowered secretariat.

While either a commission or a committee would be housed under the United Nations General Assembly's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), if the choice is to be a weak committee within ECOSOC, one Northern delegate, who wished to remain anonymous, said the result would be to "consign it to oblivion". However, as ambassador Razali Ismail of Malaysia put it, "If we can't agree on the necessary funds to pay for Agenda 21, we may not have to worry about the institutions to implement the conclusions of the Earth Summit."

Money?

And it is on this final question of financial resources that the governments of the North and the South remain far apart. Before they can resolve this central negotiating point they have to have some dollar amount on the table for which G-77 governments feel will be worth successfully concluding those negotiating points that are the priorities of Northern governments, such as the Rio Declaration and the climate, forestry and biodiversity conventions. What is the low number: 5 billion or 25 billion? Or the high? And where is that important middle range? Unless delegations bring some of these numbers to the table after their intersessional discussions, the remaining road-blocks will be difficult to remove.

UN special session by 1997

In the draft text on "Institutional Arrangements" the General Assembly has been asked by the Preparatory Committee to consider holding a special session on environment and development no later than in 1997 for the purposes of "overall review and appraisal of Agenda 21". This is not only a good way to make sure that the long-term unfinished business of the Earth Summit is properly dealt with, but it will also be an opportunity to review a proposed second round of national reports. The Committee also specified that by 1996 local authorities in each country should have conducted "consultations with their populations, with a local Agenda 21 agreed upon by the local community".

After Rio, with a great deal of luck, the governments of the world will have a successfully concluded Agenda 21, with an international community willing to take responsibility for implementing it, principles that will guide it and reasonable financial resources to pay for it. That will only be possible if the heads of state and government can summon the courage and political will to do the right thing by all the rest of us.

However, the best news from this long road to Rio is that the success of a sustainable future for the world's citizens will not solely depend on what the governments can accomplish over two weeks in Rio. A process much bigger than the governments' agenda has been put in motion—and there is no stopping it now. ■

Rio Declaration

Principle 4

In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.

Principle 5

All states and all people shall co-operate in the essential task of eradicating poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in order to decrease the disparities in standards of living and better meet the needs of the majority of the people of the world.

Michael McCoy is director of the United States-based Center for Citizen Advocacy, and is Development Forum's *special correspondent for the Earth Summit.*

Key role of big business emerges

By Richard Leonard

There is little doubt that business, especially transnational corporations (TNCs), which control 70 per cent of international trade, is the engine of the world economy. The role of the private sector in UNCED—in environment and development—is much less clear.

Phil Foster

Recognizing the central role business would inevitably play in the UNCED process and in global efforts to protect the environment, UNCED secretary-general Maurice Strong urged the formation of the Business Council for Sustainable Development (BCSD), a high-powered panel of 48 business executives, to serve as a link between the Earth Summit and the global business community.

The Business Council was set up in Geneva in 1990 by Stephan Schmidheiny, a Swiss industrialist, who also serves as Strong's principal adviser for business and industry.

For Schmidheiny, sustainable development combines two key objectives: environmental protection and growth. "It is about meeting the economic and social needs of today's generation," he says, "without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Business bears its share of responsibility for past environmental problems, he acknowledges, but is also "very well placed to make a major contribution to solutions in the future."

BCSD's report to the Earth Summit, to be released in May, entitled "Changing Course: A Global Business Perspective on the Environment and Development", presents practical recommendations on business-government partnerships to move towards sustainable development, including key—and controversial—topics such as technology co-operation, pricing of environmental resources and services, capital markets, energy and trade.

For BCSD, "technology co-operation", for example, is a very different concept from "technology transfer", as called for by developing countries, though both see it as a key to promoting sustainable development in the South.

In BCSD's view, international business partnerships, such as joint ventures, operating in open, competitive markets, offer the best opportunity for putting the poorer countries of the world on the path to sustainable development.

In this vein, Edgar S. Woolard, Jr., chairman and CEO of E.I. Du Pont de Nemours & Co., the chemical industry giant, told a briefing at the Summit's fourth PrepCom in March that, while BCSD supports the proposals of Agenda 21, the action plan to implement Summit recommendations, "it gives the impression the world's economic machinery is basically sound, needing only some fine-tuning and someone to pay the bill.

"But", he continued, "the interrelated challenges of environmental degradation, on one hand, and poverty and inequality are not the result of an otherwise sound machine needing adjustment. We believe they are a result of some general failures of the machine itself."

The key, Woolard emphasized, is real policy reform in developing countries based on open, competitive markets linked to open, democratic political systems.

Chamber of Commerce

The other main business organization involved in the Summit is the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). The Paris-based ICC has 7,500 member companies, including most of the world's largest TNCs, in 110 countries and is the long-time representative of international business at United Nations bodies.

The centerpiece of ICC's Summit programme is its Business Charter for Sustainable Development, which includes 16 principles for environmentally-sound business, covering areas such as management practices, employee training, environmental impact and waste generation, safe disposal of wastes, emergency preparedness and environmental audits and assessments.

The Business Charter, which was drawn in part from recommendations prepared by the former Centre on Transnational Corporations at the United Nations, has been endorsed by 750 companies and business groups, including more than half of the companies in "Fortune 100"—a list of the world's largest industrial corporations.

For the Summit, ICC has a series of briefs on key issues that reflect its preference for market-based incentives for environmental goals and opposition to international regulations and restrictions on corporate activities.

The first brief, Economics and the Environment, gives an overview of ICC recommendations, stating that "free competitive markets operating within a harmonious regulatory framework produce less waste and thereby cause less environmental stress, while protected and distorted markets do the opposite."

On specific issues the briefs outline positions that generally run counter to those of many environmental NGOs (*see box*). For example, rather than firm targets to curb greenhouse gases linked to global warming, ICC, like the United States, proposes additional research and a mix of policies to promote energy-efficient investments.

ICC also backs nuclear power and opposes restrictions on exports of hazardous wastes, two positions that have drawn criticism from environmental NGOs.

After Rio?

As controversy around Agenda 21 indicates, implementation of Summit recommendations is a difficult issue. In the area of business activity, environmental NGOs generally favour setting up international regulations and ways to assure greater TNC accountability. BCSD and ICC look instead to self-regulation by business, pointing out that business is already increasingly responsive to environmental concerns.

In large measure business concerns about the Earth Summit have been met. Rather than framing binding regulations, Agenda 21 presents recommendations and goals, leaving implementation mainly up to individual governments around the world and to businesses.

Jean-Charles Rouher of ICC comments that, "after all, the onus of proving that sustainable industrial activity is feasible rests primarily on the private business sector with its control of most of the technological and productive capacity needed to conceive environmentally more benign products, processes and services. This is not a job that will—or can—be done by governments or environmental groups."

While making no commitments about Agenda 21, ICC has announced plans to set up an international panel to review regularly worldwide corporate implementation of its Business Charter, a step welcomed by Mostafa K. Tolba, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). With the Business Charter endorsed thus far by only 10 per cent of its member companies, ICC clearly has considerable work ahead.

BCSD is proposing new ways to channel the resources of TNCs towards sustainable development. Hugh Faulkner, executive director of BCSD and former Canadian cabinet minister and ALCAN, Ltd., executive, comments that foreign direct investment by corporations is "probably the most effective vehicle to move environmentally sound technology to developing countries. We are going to have to explore ways to link official development financing more effectively to foreign direct investment. We feel this holds enormous possibilities."

Business responsibilities in the areas of environment and development will continue to grow. As the financial and technical restraints on the implementation of Agenda 21 become more apparent in the post-Summit period, it is likely that governments will be turning increasingly to the business community as a resource. Business appears to be interested, if not apprehensive, about the challenge. ■

Richard Leonard is a freelance business writer based in New York City.

Transnationals challenged

Although business groups did not maintain high profiles in the lengthy preparatory process leading up to Rio, several key non-governmental organizations (NGOs) argue that big business played a crucial role in weakening Agenda 21, the Summit's main action plan, when it came to challenging "business as usual".

The deep-seated antagonisms between many environmental NGOs and the business community, particularly the transnational corporations (TNCs), spilled over at the end of PrepCom IV in April when a group of influential NGOs led by Greenpeace, the Third World Network, the Forum of Brazilian NGOs and the Friends of the Earth called for strong international regulation of TNCs.

The NGO concerns were endorsed by more than 20 other organizations and coalitions.

The NGOs specifically accused TNCs of "greenwashing" their images rather than making sincere attempts to change destructive environmental practices. They said that negotiations over Agenda 21 seemed to be headed in the direction of support for voluntary self-regulatory programmes by business.

Business preference for self-regulation is generally reflected in the draft language of Agenda 21, which frames many recommendations without providing specific targets or regulations.

These groups also expressed their dismay over the recent downgrading, as part of an ongoing reorganization of the United Nations secretariat, of the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, which they had looked to for tracking business compliance with Summit goals.

"By writing their own ticket, transnationals are hijacking the Earth Summit process", said Kenny Bruno of Greenpeace. "History has shown that there is a need to strictly control the activities of such companies, and UNCED must deal with this directly."

For their part, business organizations involved in the Summit insist that corporations have the technology and management expertise to promote sustainable development, and that this is best done through self-regulation, free markets and free trade.

Responding to questions from environmental NGOs on whether corporations could be relied on to regulate themselves, Edgar Woolard, Jr., chairman and CEO of E.I. Du Pont de Nemours & Co., the chemical industry giant, pointed to successful international treaties such as the Montreal Protocol to eliminate chemicals depleting the ozone layer, which have prompted widespread co-operation from transnationals. "There is an enormous trend," he said, "towards business accepting responsibility to work with governments on environmental issues."

Criticism of business support for *laissez-faire* policies on the environment was voiced by Jack Doyle, senior analyst for technology and international policy with Friends of the Earth, a United Kingdom-based NGO, and author of a report critical of Du Pont's environmental record: "It has only been the last 10 years, with the progression of environmental laws, that we have seen the market-place assign value to environmental protection as a bottom line consideration, and to correctly assign liabilities. Laws and regulations are very important to help define a responsible market-place."

R.L.

The gender agenda: The message has gotten through

By Perdita Huston

"There were not as many women delegates as we would like to see, true—but real progress has been made on women's issues. It is no longer acceptable to make light of women and sustainable development. Sensitivity to the question of who manages natural resources, to the role of women as primary producers, is increasing. The message has gotten through."

Such was the judgement of Alexandra Bezeredi, a senior member of the Canadian delegation to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), following Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) IV in April.

Bezeredi has seen a marked improvement in acknowledging women's concerns since the first preparatory meetings two years ago. This is due in large part, she believes, to women's efforts to call attention to both the substance of issues and to the need for increased representation of women on delegations.

The Women's Action Agenda 21, a document resulting from a major gathering of women in Miami, Florida, last November, stated clearly the environmental and development concerns of women. In fact, a "women's agenda" emerged from that meeting's workshops, "tribunal hearings" and case studies presented by 1,500 women from all the world's regions.

The extensive agenda ranges from demands for controls on pesticides and toxic wastes, which are showing up in breast milk and drinking water, to demilitarization and outright cancellation of Third World debt.

The women's message was clear: "We come together to pledge our commitment to the empowerment of women, the central

Alison Seiffer

and powerful force in the search for equity between and among peoples of the Earth and for a balance between them and the life-support systems that sustain us all."

Once the recommendations were adopted, the next step was to bring the women's agenda items to the attention of those who formulate UNCED policy documents: the government delegations. That effort aimed to educate all delegates about the women's agenda and to insist that more women be on delegations to deliver that message.

Alternative language

According to Bezeredi, women's groups, which first organized as a caucus at PrepCom II last year in Geneva, were very effective in providing delegates with alternative language to the official documents. "The Women's Caucus went through the texts line by line and supplied alternative phrasing where it was needed. It was very helpful; I personally worked off that substitute language many times."

Two of the most important places where wording from the Women's Caucus was incorporated were in texts on institutional mechanisms of Agenda 21 and in principle 20 of the draft Rio Declaration. The former now calls for gender balance in the makeup of the staffing of any post-Summit institution that may be created. Principle 20 now states, "Women have a vital role to play in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development."

Typical among the scores of other suggestions made by the Women's Caucus, one simply added a clause in the freshwater resources text: "Local communities must participate in all phases of water management, *ensuring the full involvement of women in view of their crucial role in the practical day-to-day supply, management and use of water...*" Indeed, many such phrases were added during PrepCom IV.

Former United States congresswoman Bella Abzug, representing an NGO called the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), organized daily meetings of the Women's Caucus and constantly called for women's inclusion in policy-making at all levels.

Abzug explains the need for extra pressure. "In the documents tabled at PrepCom I, there wasn't a single mention of women. By PrepCom III, we had managed to move the adoption of a resolution which called for 'the effective participation of women in knowledge generation, decision-making and management at local, national, regional and international levels'."

Women seek involvement not because they are different, impatient, feminist or uppity, but because they actually manage, use and are dependent upon healthy natural systems.

They also pushed for specific language in each of the sectoral and cross-sectoral areas of Agenda 21 to ensure that progress towards sustainable development incorporates measures which benefit women and to promote women's participation in UNCED activities at all levels and in each sector.

"That resolution gave us the opportunity to put pressure on delegations," Abzug explains. "There is a long way to go, but we have made a difference. There is far more attention to issues affecting women. And we have empowered women on many delegations to speak up for women's concerns."

Bezeredi agrees. Women were indeed supportive of each other. "At one point when a [male] delegate objected to an addition I proposed referring to women, a Kenyan woman delegate would not let it be deleted. She simply stated 'I believe what is said here is a key point. It should not be changed.' She was determined and it showed. The objection was dropped."

Yes, progress is being made. From women's involvement in UNCED has emerged a simple message: women seek involvement not because they are different, impatient, feminist or uppity, but because they actually manage, use and are dependent upon healthy natural systems. They and their families suffer when environments are degraded. It is only logical that, this being the case, women want to be involved in making the decisions which will affect their lives and well-being.

This message is beginning to be heard in the hall of policy-making, but the messenger remains to a large extent excluded from the debates. In Rio we will soon learn just how well the message has been received. But whatever the outcome of the Earth Summit, women have been empowered by the UNCED process. They are more than ever convinced that the Women's Action Agenda 21 is crucial to sustainable and peaceful life on the planet. From every region of the world we learn of new groups that have adopted the Women's Agenda and are committed to working for its implementation, there where they live. The message is clear, and messengers are multiplying. ■

Perdita Huston, based in Washington, D.C., is a writer on women's development and environment issues.

Women: A new world order

Continued from page 1

collective experience and hopes, from North and South, into the recommendations of Agenda 21. We battled, in long hours of negotiations in and outside of the formal process, to ensure that the voice of women is heard in these official texts. They will make a difference.

A women's agenda

We know that we must drastically change the the present world order. We who produce 80 per cent of the food in Africa will not have our children die of hunger. We who fetch the water across Asia will not have our children die of water-borne diseases. We who have planted millions of trees will not walk another mile for firewood. We who spend 18 hours a day caring for our families will no longer permit this to be recorded as "unproductive" labour.

In Rio, at this meeting of all humanity 500 years after a voyage that heralded the greatest environmental shift in human history, we must commit ourselves to change, not only by words but by policies and mechanisms that speak to the justice and good sense of our demands.

In the weeks before Rio and in Rio itself we must fight for the noblest vision from governments and organizations—one which must include a commitment to the women's agenda. We must not only maintain the ground we have gained in the negotiations leading to Rio, but insist that our governments close the most glaring gaps in the documents that speak most directly and urgently to women's health and livelihood.

We must insist that the respect for life be sacrosanct and not permit any retreat in the defense of nature's diversity. We must defend the wisdom of thousands of years of distilled experience of our farmers and peoples against technologies that lead to our dependence and the eventual destruction of our very Earth.

Women know that the globalization of the world's economy has meant that their lives have been commodified and that they are required to "adjust" their economies by "rationalizing" their already inadequate social services and submitting to international markets.

For this reason, we should demand that Third World debt be cancelled in recognition of its inherent injustice: a decent gesture from the North 500 years after Columbus introduced colonialism to this hemisphere. Above all, we must insist that the weapons and systems for war be left behind in the twentieth century and that those resources be used for life.

The non-binding, non-legal declarations that we are preparing to make in Rio can be the first statements of a "new world order". The ships in this voyage from the New World must be ballasted with the weight of our truths, piloted with a zeal and adventure that would ensure a future for all humanity.

Women must be prepared to fight in both the people's '92 Global Forum and the Summit of governments to fight for these basic truths. We must pledge ourselves to end the discrimination and violence against women and hence nature. We must bring our sons, our husbands, our fathers, our brothers and ourselves to the understanding that with justice to women lies the guarantee for an Earth in which our children can flourish.

As we leave Rio, we must leave the New World with the conviction that the 500 years since Columbus must be ended by the commitment to a new world order that recognizes the mistakes of the past, pays tribute to the resilience and courage of our humanity and acknowledges the energy, the determination and the sense of adventure which the sailing of 1492 also meant. We must finally reaffirm our oneness with nature, recognizing that humans are, after all, her most evolved creatures. ■

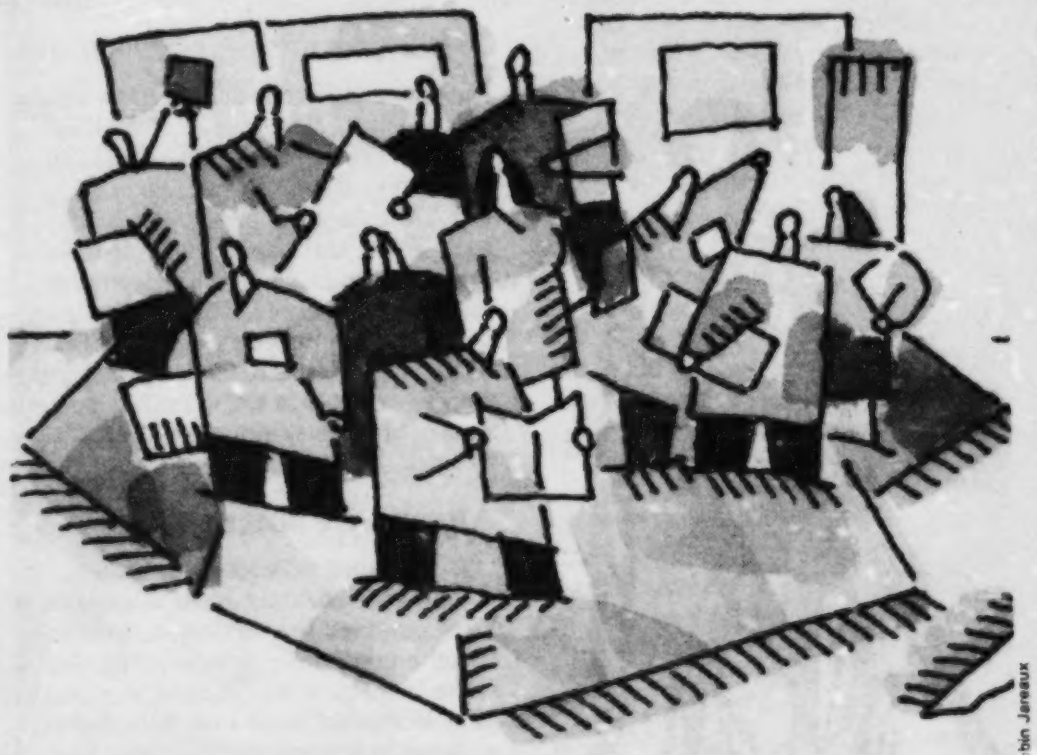
Jocelyn Dow, a businesswoman in the construction industry in Guyana, is a resource person for the Red Thread, a rural women's development programme.

Plans for people's Agenda 21 in Rio

While government delegations are struggling with their own "Agenda 21" and treaties in Riocentro, the official meeting complex for the Earth Summit, up to 25,000 representatives of social movements, women's organizations, local community groups, indigenous people's organizations and an assortment of national and international non-governmental organization (NGO) activists from all over the planet will be negotiating their own plan of action and treaties for the post-Summit period. They will undoubtedly go much further than the official agreements, though their negotiations will probably be no less fractious and more symbolic than binding.

International NGO meetings are scheduled for groups as diverse as the Biotechnology Working Group, the Women's Caucus, regional groups from Latin America, South Asia and Africa, and regional networks such as the Third World Network and the Northern People's Alliance on Environment and Development.

There will also be special presentations on specific issues such as solar energy, trade and the environment, and nine days of meetings under a huge tent organized on behalf of women's organizations around the world by the Brazilian Women's Coalition, with the assistance of some international organizations such as the United States-based Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO).



Robin Jareaux

Rio Declaration

Principle 6

The special situation and needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed and those most environmentally vulnerable, shall be given special priority. International actions in the field of environment and development should also address the interests and needs of all countries.

NGO treaties in the works

NGO representatives that followed the four sessions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) Preparatory Committee came to the common conclusion at the end of the third and fourth PrepComs that it was not enough for NGOs to follow the government negotiations.

The NGO community decided to find ways to come to some agreement on their own priorities separate from governments. They hoped to define what kind of commitments they could make to each other over the remainder of the decade in the battle to achieve global sustainability.

It has become clear in recent years that in virtually all countries, South and North, NGOs have done a much better job at mobilizing their constituencies for policy-related action than governments. In fact, in both the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, governments lean heavily on citizens' organizations in all countries to implement the ambitious goals of the Earth Summit documents.

According to Peter Padbury of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation and one of three co-chairs for the NGO committee that has been facilitating the programme for NGO events in Rio, "The goal of the treaties process is to make sure that we are not just reacting to a government set agenda, but that we work together at stating the problem, and then develop a common action pla·." He sees the NGO treaty process as a collective global search for alternative development strategies and methods of resource sharing.

NGO treaties are being developed in over 30 different areas, covering all those in Agenda 21 as well as many that governments chose to avoid.

Treaties are being developed in over 30 different areas, covering all those in Agenda 21 as well as many that governments chose to avoid, such as Third World debt, economic conversion in regard to military spending, the phase-out of nuclear energy, the stress on sustainable energy sources, the development of a people's financial mechanism, trade, etc.

Draft texts are being developed for each treaty area by volunteer working groups that formed during the PrepCom process. These working drafts will be ready for NGOs to review in Rio. At '92 Global Forum, the first several days will be dedicated to negotiations, then the development of declarations, ending with a round of endorsements. The results of the treaty process will provide the NGO community with an internationally agreed upon organizing tool back home and a very strong platform

Continued on page 17

Increased NGO involvement challenges United Nations

By Barbara Adams

The greatly expanded participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in UNCED may have changed the United Nations conference process for good. NGOs went through a learning process that has made them immensely more knowledgeable about influencing intergovernmental policy-setting. For their part, government delegations are learning how to live with this intrusive element in the negotiation process and many feel their own performance and understanding of the issues were significantly enhanced by the NGO presence.

Once content to stage parallel events, NGOs involved in UNCED have penetrated the intergovernmental negotiating process much more than on other occasions, in both formal and informal ways. In PrepCom IV they functioned as advisers, were represented on delegations, provided expert knowledge, drafted texts taken up by governments, kept pace with many of the closed negotiations and lobbied until the last minute, sitting through the all-night session.

The NGO delegation representatives constituted a very effective means of providing input. They were influential not only on the role of NGOs and other major groups, but also on the substance of the negotiations of issues such as poverty, forests, oceans, human settlements and the Rio Declaration.

NGO monitoring and lobbying works encompassed a range of perspectives, from obtaining the strongest Agenda 21 possible to demonstrating that the solutions went well beyond the Agenda to the international economic system itself. NGO priorities also included networking and planning for the '92 NGO Forum, the NGO and social movement's meeting to take place in Rio.

To undertake this complex work schedule, NGOs divided into issue task forces, constituency and regional caucuses and ad hoc groupings. Group attendance was often self-selected, and inevitably reflected a regional bias in favour of North America. While this did not result in tensions, as it has on other occasions, it did cause concern, primarily for NGO representatives from developing countries, and was compounded by the lack of interpreters for many meetings.

The proliferation of NGO meetings, often as many as 20 per day, demonstrated the volume and diversity of NGOs. However, the abundance of NGO activities and priorities at PrepCom inhibited a more coordinated approach to the issues and their linkages. This limitation and the need to find a place and manner to address their own differences were acknowledged by NGOs in assessing their work at PrepCom IV.

While NGOs have shown that they are developing the skills and knowledge required to lobby and submit texts, this did not bring about the changes in policy that they sought, and many viewed the outcome of PrepCom IV with disappointment. Now, with a greater understanding of the process of government negotiations, many doubt whether it can do justice to their concerns.

Substantial impact

The NGOs did in fact influence many of the chapters of Agenda 21, and initial temptations to make success or failure assessments at this stage have been tempered by an understanding that the process is not yet over and that such verdicts are premature.

Governments and United Nations agencies have recognized the vital role of NGOs in the implementation of Agenda 21 and in the national programmes that must be pursued for any future success. Discussions are already under way in many organizations on how to further incorporate NGOs into the post-Summit programme work.

As far as NGOs are concerned, UNCED's major achievement may be its contribution to the internationalization of the NGOs. The networking, education and pressure to be active and effective at the multilateral level in today's world will affect the work of NGOs and the intergovernmental and United Nations processes in the future.

The United Nations is not the closed system it has been in the past. Hundreds of people representing organizations from all parts of the world have been exposed to the line-by-line process of negotiations which influences international policy-setting. At this moment, they are demonstrating that they have the knowledge, skill and commitment to stay the course. With time, this exposure and accountability could pressure the decision-making process to rise to the challenge of the planet's local and global problems.

As well as addressing the weaknesses in the governmental and United Nations decision-making processes, some NGOs recognize the need to grapple with their own processes—within and between organizations and networks—of information-sharing, resource-sharing and decision-making.

While the NGO-to-NGO process and the NGO-government interaction, often termed outside and inside work, are running side-by-side, it is increasingly recognized that they are connected. The articulation of clear, accountable and independent NGO voices is a sure way to move policies in the direction of the NGO alternative vision for sustainable development. ■

Barbara Adams is the senior programme officer of the New York office of the United Nations Non-governmental Liaison Service.

The Rio Declaration: Common ground of the Summit

By Jim Wurst

More than any single document in the mountains produced by UNCED, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development symbolizes the first major breakthrough in the effort to achieve international consensus on an amazingly broad array of problems facing our world. It is a compelling statement of agreement on a set of principles to guide concrete action to attain the goal of sustainable development on a global scale. Its 27 principles (*see page 2*) make up the only negotiated document that reaches Rio in complete form, although several governments have reserved the right to reopen discussions on it if they choose.

If Agenda 21 is the nuts and bolts "plan of action" of how to fulfil the UNCED mandate, the declaration is the broad outline of governmental intentions, the most popular expression of the principles underlying the action plan. While not legally binding, the idea behind a declaration of intentions is that governments agree on the problems and are willing to address them in a coherent manner. And since the declaration is meant to be widely distributed to the public, it is a promise by governments to the people of the world—even if the declaration contains no legal commitments.

Rio Declaration

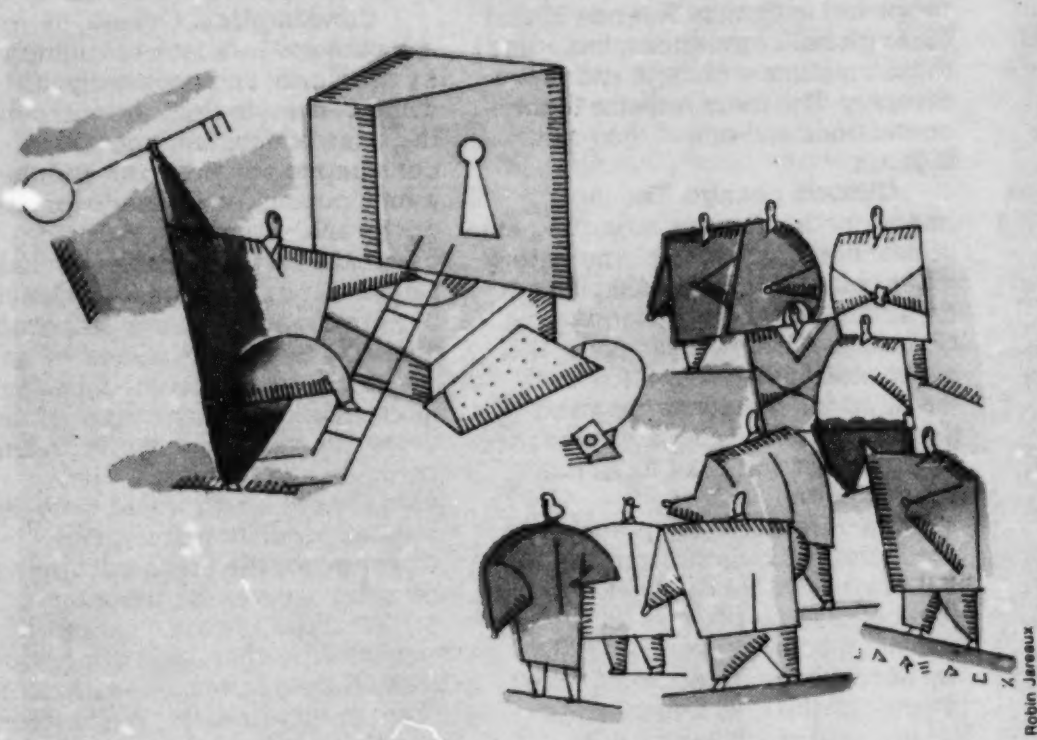
Principle 7

States shall co-operate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem. In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, states have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.

As it stands, the Rio Declaration represents a remarkable consensus among governments and, as such, reflects the compromises that governments made from their original positions at the beginning of the Preparatory Committee negotiations that began two years ago. For this reason, a review of the changing positions is as revealing as the declaration itself.

North and South

Although by no means the only differences, negotiators split most dramatically between Northern and Southern positions (while the South pursued a common strategy through the G-77, the Northern governments often differed in their positions, with the United States, for example, taking a harder line against commitments than the European Community or Nordic countries). Early drafts reflected the radically different views of the North and the South on the key issues of poverty, consumption, control over natural resources, and the responsibility for addressing them.



Initially, the North wanted a general statement, long on inspirational language and short on specific proposals, and the South (in the form of the G-77, headed at PrepCom IV by Pakistan) was intent on a broad outline of governmental intentions. Pakistan's ambassador Jamsheed Marker explained, "We felt we have had this high-minded language before and we have had our fill of it; we wanted something more substantial." Substance for the G-77 revolved around four key issues: the eradication of poverty, commitments of new financial resources and for the transfer of technology, and national sovereignty over natural resources.

Even the discussions regarding the nature of the document reflected basic differences in approach. Up until the last week of the PrepCom, the document was referred to as the "Earth Charter", but it was finally dubbed the Rio Declaration. "Charter" fits the concept of a grand general statement, but Marker argued the word is more legalistic, implying a document that needs national ratification, while "declaration" better fits a set of principles. Eventually, most delegations came around to this view.

Saving the 'D'

Because the declaration is so short (compared to the 800-page-plus draft of Agenda 21), some of the fundamental differences between North and South were distilled down to their most basic elements. The most fundamental of these is the relationship between development and the environment.

Governments—mostly Southern, but also some Northern ones—and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worried that in previous PrepComs the "D" was fading out of UNCED. They were concerned that protecting the environment would take precedence over fostering development. This was something the South wanted to avoid at all costs, believing that such an imbalance would end up putting the burden on the South by having it sacrifice its own economic development in order that the planet's environment could be saved, while the North would not make comparable sacrifices.

The G-77's first draft was clearly designed to place the responsibility for both environmental degradation and development assistance on the developed world, prompting some Northern governments to complain that the text shifted the balance too far in favour of development.

The declaration is "the best possible outcome of the complicated process of negotiation that we have been through."

Both North and South were working to avoid language in the declaration that might imply restrictions on practices they consider vital. The North wanted to ensure that it would not be committed to changes in its production and consumption patterns. The South wished to avoid language that could be construed as hindering its necessary development efforts. Thus the North objected to language such as "all countries, in particular developed countries, shall make commitments to address their unsustainable patterns of consumption," while the South could not accept wording of general responsibility that could place the same burdens on the South as on the North.

The ease with which the phrase "sustainable development" was used illustrated this point in reverse. Since there is no set definition of the term, it could be used by everyone without danger.

In contrast, the phrase "right to development" was territory for much legalistic, moral and political duelling. Every G-77 draft, including the final one, called for the fulfilment of this right. The first draft called it "an inalienable right", but the final version is softened to say "the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet development and environmental needs of present and future generations." The North, and the United States in particular, objected, saying such a right has no basis in international law.

Consumption

The highly divisive issues of consumption versus population as key threats to development and the environment are illustrative of the opposing analyses of the South and the North. Each sees the problem it is less responsible for as the greater danger. The South sees Northern consumption as the major source of pollution, while the North considers the Southern population boom, with the deforestation and desertification that result from trying to meet the needs of the people, as the greater threat.

In its original draft, the G-77 wrote, "The major historical and current cause of the continuing deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, particularly in the developed countries." But the United States draft offered less accusatory language: "States and people should seek to eliminate or reduce unsustainable patterns of production and consumption."

The final draft states, "The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command." Thus the North accepts responsibility without specifying what it will do about the problem.

To further incorporate concerns about consumption and population, the document reads, "States should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies." This implies some kind of population control, but "appropriate" lets countries define it as minimally as they wish.

The final text was hammered out in the last two days of the PrepCom and approved in the last hours of the meeting. No one was totally pleased, but Ole Kristian Holte of Norway said the declaration is "the best possible outcome of the complicated process of negotiation that we have been through." Marker called it "a very finely balanced document" that "should be seen as part of a package". That package—Agenda 21 and the financial arrangements, as well as the Rio Declaration—will hopefully be wrapped up in Rio. ■

Jim Wurst is a New York-based journalist specializing in United Nations issues.

Agenda 21:

What to expect in Rio

By Johannah Bernstein, Pamela Chasek and Langston James Goree VI

When government delegations arrive in Rio for the Earth Summit, the fact is that most of what they will be agreeing to has been worked out in laborious negotiations in preparatory meetings over the past two years. While many of the key issues have still to be resolved— and with a lot of luck may be resolved in Rio— agreement has been accomplished on close to 85 per cent of Agenda 21 (the 750-page global action plan). It is, however, the remaining unresolved 15 per cent that is deeply problematic.

Rio Declaration

Principle 8

To achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, states should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies.

Principle 9

States should co-operate to strengthen endogenous capacity-building for sustainable development by improving scientific understanding through exchanges of scientific and technological knowledge, and by enhancing the development, adaptation, diffusion and transfer of technologies, including new and innovative technologies.

The most difficult and, indeed, contentious issues to be concluded at the June Earth Summit include the statement of forest principles (the precursor to a future global forests convention); climate change; transfer of environmentally appropriate technology to the developing world; the institutional arrangements necessary to implement Agenda 21, and, the most intractable of them all, the magnitude and means of transferring financial resources to developing countries to enable them to meet the global environmental norms that are expected to emerge after Rio.

Thus, what was expected to be a two-week gold-pen-cum-massive-photo-opportunity in Rio has quickly been transformed into the most critical of negotiating meetings which will be held so far. Government officials will attempt to conclude in two weeks what hundreds of officials have simply been unable to resolve over the past two years.

What follows is an overview of agenda issues that remain to be dealt with by the heads of state, as well as a review of what in fact was achieved at this past negotiating session, PrepCom IV, in New York.

Challenge for Rio

Finance. Although several attempts were made to agree on a compromise text—and one was very nearly reached—negotiations collapsed, principally over issues relating to the Global Environment Facility (GEF). This is the mechanism proposed to finance Agenda 21 and other global conventions, including those on climate change and biodiversity. The issue remains highly contentious and one of the most difficult.

Climate change. The most important discussions regarding the convention on climate change are taking place under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC). At this point, the major outstanding dispute is over the need for specific targets and timetables for reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and fossil fuel consumption.

The Agenda 21 chapter on atmosphere avoids substantive matters that would duplicate the parallel negotiating process for the climate change convention. If INC has not reached agreement on this chapter by the final negotiations at the end of April, it will be considerably reworked in Rio.

Technology transfer. Northern and Southern countries still remain divided over the terms for the transfer of environmentally appropriate technology to the South. Northern countries continue to support such transfer only at commercial or market rates. Southern countries argue that they lack sufficient financial resources to obtain such technology at anything more than preferential or concessional rates.

Consumption. Overall, there appeared to be a lack of willingness by the North, and especially the United States, to deal seriously with the issue of consumption. Over-consumption in the North and the unmet consumption needs for basic goods and services in the South demand a restructuring of the use of natural capital and present lifestyles.

Few countries were prepared to deal with these core issues. In fact, the negotiations became mired in Faustian bargains when at one point it was rumoured that the North and the South had reached a deal whereby the North would drop the issue of population growth in exchange for the South's dropping the issue of over-consumption.

What did remain clear, however, was the continued opposition by the United States delegation, on direct orders from the White House, to any language in the text that could be interpreted as necessitating a "diminution of the present American standard of living".

International economy. Again, Northern countries demonstrated a definite lack of willingness to address seriously the structural changes that must be made within the international economy to encourage sustainable development.

At this point, political will is lacking to initiate the necessary process of global economic reform that will reverse the South-North negative outflow of resources; improve the South's terms of trade; and reduce its debt burden.

Transnational corporations (TNCs). Instead of calling for strong national and international regulation of TNCs, countries acquiesced to the dismantling of the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations and have allowed the role of TNCs to go unchecked by the PrepCom.

Health and human safety. The United States has opposed language within various negotiating texts that refers to military and corporate activities that could threaten health and human safety.

As well, the United States has remained steadfastly opposed to references to international regulation of biotechnology safety. Other unresolved areas pertain to the storage of radioactive waste near the marine environment and the international trafficking of hazardous waste, as well as the need for a nuclear safety convention.

Biodiversity. Agreement is still to be achieved on the difficult question of access to and ownership of biodiversity resources in developing countries. Although the issue of biodiversity is primarily being negotiated by INC for a framework convention on biodiversity, much of the Agenda 21 chapter is being held up pending the outcome of these parallel negotiations.

Forests. The standard North-South split prevented agreement on many of the difficult and unresolved issues such as national sovereignty over forest resources and free trade in forest products. The draft text is so mired in disagreements that some suggest it may not even make it to Rio.

Institutions. While the level of debate was hindered by a fundamental lack of creative and innovative ideas, negotiations on the question of institutional arrangements necessary to implement Agenda 21 have at least been narrowed down to several viable options.

Earth Charter. Although the actual text of the Earth Charter, now called the Rio Declaration, falls short of everyone's expectations, it is the only agreed negotiating text going to Rio (*see related story on page 9*).

While the fourth PrepCom failed in securing specific commitments for new and additional financial resources, technology transfer and specific targets for carbon dioxide reduction, it has in fact set the stage for a very important process that will over time secure increased global co-operation. ■

Richard B. Mock

Johannah Bernstein is the national co-ordinator of the Canadian Participatory Committee for UNCED based in Ottawa. Pamela Chasek is a doctoral student at Johns Hopkins University. Langston James Goree VI is director of an applied research institute in the Western Amazon. All three co-edited the Earth Summit Bulletin, *a daily reporting service at the fourth PrepCom meeting in New York in March.*

Sustaining biodiversity: Taxing biotechnology?

By Pratap Chatterjee

One of the key concerns of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) is the negotiation of a biodiversity convention which would help to slow down the alarming rate of loss of plant and animal species on the planet.

Biodiversity is the variety of plants and animals on land, in the sea and in the air. Each of these species can have many different types, or "strains", to use the scientific term. For example, a plant that grows in the desert region may vary greatly from the very same plant growing in the mountains.

Human beings use many plants for food and depend on their adaptability to climatic and soil conditions. Often farmers have bred together two strains to make a third that combines the strengths of the two original strains.

But growing dependence on the most productive or uniform breeds, e.g., cows that produce the most milk or plants that produce the roundest, reddest tomatoes, has pushed many hardy indigenous varieties to extinction through neglect. These strains may possess genetic traits that will be valuable in the future.

Lisa Haney

For example, the Egyptian Fayoumi chicken is on the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) endangered list as Egyptian egg farmers turn to Western battery chickens that have poor tolerance to heat.

The sudden and dramatic loss of biodiversity in recent decades is largely caused by habitat destruction, over-harvesting and pollution. The threat of global warming could further accelerate the loss.

What the biodiversity convention being negotiated in the UNCED process would seek to accomplish is to set out rules for sharing information on our global biodiversity and establish effective countermeasures to protect it. It would also call for improved plant, animal and fish breeding through traditional and modern biotechnologies to improve yields for consumption.

Clearly, the preservation of species' natural habitats is the surest way to ensure the planet's sustained biodiversity. But there are other solutions that are also necessary and effective. Getting farmers and governments to participate in the preservation of plant species in seed banks is one solution. But even this gets very complex and has raised issues that lie at the heart of some of the debates in the UNCED negotiations.

Role of seed banks

Some 20 per cent of the world's valuable plant species are already preserved in gene banks, such as those of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and its network of 16 international research centres, which hold the seeds in trust for developing countries.

These seed banks have raised the difficult issue of who should profit from the use of these seeds, especially in their manipulation through biotechnology. During the Green Revolution, for example, the banks used their existing seeds to breed new high-yielding varieties that maximized the use of fertilizers and pesticides and were seen to benefit Northern chemical companies.

Activists like Henk Hobbelink of Genetic Research Action International say that while many of these plants originally came from developing countries (like rice from India and China and cotton from Egypt), it is mainly the seed companies that own the new varieties, together with the fertilizer and pesticide companies, that profit from their manipulation.

Meanwhile, the activists say, the farmers in developing countries—the key players who bred and preserved many of the plants that we use today, from apples to zucchini—receive no compensation for centuries of keeping the food and seed stock healthy. It is this effort, often part of knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities and embodiment of

Continued on page 14

Rio Declaration

Principle 10

Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.

Forests: In search of principles

By John Mukela

Despite the original hopes, held mostly by Northern governments, that a binding convention on the world's forests might be ready to be signed in Rio together with the treaties on climate change and biodiversity, it will be a big step if even a preliminary set of forest principles can be agreed on at the Earth Summit.

Attempts by industrialized countries to convince developing countries to accede to a forest convention during PrepCom IV were blocked by Malaysia in the Group of 77, the developing country bloc in the United Nations General Assembly. The G-77 then managed to stall negotiations on a set of forest principles, although it argues that these need to be spelled out in detail before moving on to convention discussions.

The North has been adamant in its position that a convention is the best possible way of addressing the various problems linked with the management and conservation of forests, particularly the tropical forests which are being logged and burned at alarming rates. Developing countries do not see the need for such a convention, citing their present economic dependence on the forests and their sovereignty over these areas.

They also see a double standard in the positions of such Northern governments as Canada and the United States, which call for more rigorous standards regarding the logging of forests in the South than in the North. Whereas 50 per cent of the original forests still remain in the South, only 20 per cent of standing forests in the North remain virgin.

The forest principles deadlock is providing developing countries with the breathing space to formulate their negotiating strategy, which had appeared somewhat uncoordinated during PrepCom IV. The G-77 has the upper hand in any future talks on forests because they control the largest remaining stands of forests and the principles, as they now read, clearly favour the South.

Sovereignty

Regarding the principle of sovereignty, for example, the global management of forests would guarantee the national right to continue logging the forests. Financing would be correlated with the additional funding being provided by the North to stabilize exploitation of the forests.

Progress in the principle negotiations by Working Group 1 was undermined by the uncompromising demands by the two negotiating camps—which, perhaps more than any other negotiating forum, clearly illustrated the North-South divide. Industrialized countries were accused of focusing too much attention on the need for a global mechanism to manage tropical forests, a goal which would be unattainable without a legally-binding convention.

For their part, developing countries are wary that such a convention will limit their capacity to exploit their forest resources economically. This is why developing countries continue to resist strongly anything that appears to "tie them down in legal strings". They equally stress their right to "sovereignty", in direct conflict with their industrialized partners, who increasingly view forests, particularly those like the Amazon rainforest, as a "global inheritance".

This position is directly tied to developing country demands that they be financially compensated and assisted by the North to enable a smooth transition towards sustainable management of their forests while maintaining an acceptable economic and social balance. Industrialized countries steer clear of making firm financial commitments.

Another contentious stumbling-block is the reluctance of industrialized countries to commit themselves to change their consumption patterns and high energy use. Southern delegations feel that the North places too much emphasis on the function of forests as "carbon sinks" that absorb carbon dioxide rather than on the problem of carbon emissions produced mostly by inefficient energy use in the North. Developing countries say these issues must be addressed before they enter into convention negotiations that could eventually restrain their economic development.

The South maintains that before agreeing to a set of principles containing their concerns, a clearer picture of the negotiations in other working groups must first evolve. "We cannot commit ourselves to principles which do not address these concerns," said one G-77 spokesperson, "because forests are only a small part of the total package." ■

John Mukela is a journalist who covered PrepCom IV for the NGO newsletter Crosscurrents.

Population: Still a lightning rod

By Victoria Johnson

Population growth, long a prickly international policy issue, has been pushed to centre stage in the negotiations of Agenda 21. As one of the North-South divides, it has been targeted as a major factor in global environmental problems prompting the ensuing fear of "controlling" populations to conserve resources. It is also one of the battlegrounds over the issue of empowerment of women.

There is little debate that the issue of population growth falls within the UNCED's domain. As the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) noted last year, "The search for sustainability must be within the context of population and natural resource issues." This view has been embraced by the Northern countries, which have pressed developing countries to make slowing growth an urgent priority.

The environmental equation

At the start of UNCED negotiations, there was a tendency among some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from the South and Northern academics to downplay the effect of population on the environment. But over the past two years, developing countries have come a long way toward accepting population as part of the environmental equation.

With 90 per cent of world population growth occurring in the poorer countries, growth is clearly an important factor affecting environmental change. From another perspective, however, 80 per cent of the world's resources are being consumed by a mere 20 per cent of its people, posing the flip side of the population problem.

Many in the North have yet to acknowledge the key role of their alarmingly wasteful consumption and production patterns as a major factor in environmental degradation. During PrepCom IV, members of the US delegation, for example, maintained that "United States lifestyles are not up for negotiation", and proposed that Agenda 21 language addressing the global impact on consumption patterns be eliminated.

From a Southern perspective, there must be a commitment to reduce the high consumption levels of the North—which cause environmental problems both within and outside the countries where the resources are consumed. Without a commitment by the developed countries to address consumption seriously, the world could go backwards in the population debate.

Rio Declaration

Principle 11

States shall enact effective environmental legislation. Environmental standards, management objectives and priorities should reflect the environmental and developmental context to which they apply. Standards applied by some countries may be inappropriate and of unwarranted economic and social cost to other countries, in particular developing countries.

Family planning

Although it appears that there has been some progress in the population debate, negotiations reflected old concerns about providing full access to family planning and contraception. Some delegations challenged language relating to the right of individuals and couples to choose their family size, universal access to family-planning services, the provision of safe contraceptives and the development of culturally-based information and education programmes that transmit reproductive health messages.

The Holy See lobbied to remove specific references to contraception, even when agreement on the text was thought to have been reached. Warning bells started to sound as NGOs realized that the battle for an individual's right to choose was still up for negotiation.

Many Catholic, as well as Moslem, delegates objected to using the phrase "personally-held values," which they argued were meaningless outside traditionally and nationally held cultural values. There were also references that showed a preference for relying on national legal systems rather than on a woman's right regarding family-planning choices.

As there was growing agreement, even among governments, that these rights and policies should be supported, both the suggested sections on population and consumption were at least partially salvaged in the final Agenda 21 chapter alongside the issue of poverty.

Thus, the final version of the document retained the idea of "personal values" as central to the development of population policies, albeit in the context of national "cultural and ethical values". Although some of the progressive text relating specifically to "family planning" was lost, the paper discusses population policies in terms of "planning of family size" and providing "affordable and accessible services"; other additions were negotiated with the NGO Women's Caucus.

Link to poverty

The text of the paper on "Demographic Dynamics" and those on health and the role of women include important ideas about individual values and women's empowerment, with reference to reproductive health care systems centred around and managed by women.

Several NGOs stressed that the critical issue of poverty must be acted upon alongside population to enable women to exercise their choice in determining their family size. This could be addressed within the framework of Primary Environmental Care—which combines the concepts of empowering communities and meeting basic needs with caring for the environment.

UNFPA, the lead United Nations agency on population matters, recently stressed: "If progress is to be made in dealing with the causes of such far-reaching and complicated problems as rural-urban migration, degradation of critical resources and falling per capita food production, more attention must be paid to grass-roots needs and fostering the commitment of local communities to help resolve them."

Figures from the World Fertility Survey overseen by UNFPA indicate that population growth in developing countries could be reduced by 30 per cent if women who did not want to become pregnant were empowered to make that choice. An estimated 300 million men and women in developing countries want to plan their family size, but lack the means to do so. The Survey argues that planning of population and consumption in both North and South is important, but that any form of control inspired by environmental considerations or the use of coercive policies must be avoided.

All this debate and discussion about population at the Earth Summit runs contrary to the recent press, which has often stated that issues of population are not being addressed. Population is certainly still on the agenda alongside consumption. In fact, the implementation of population policies is discussed in depth, and the chapter which is going to Rio has done much to allay fears that the issue would not be addressed from the perspective of women's and couple's choice.

It is vital that all the messages about environment and development be portrayed as issues of concern to the general public, as people have the power to pressure their governments. Changing personal lifestyles must be stressed, not as a "sacrifice" but as a benefit to the "quality" of all people's lives. ■

Victoria Johnson is the environmental analyst at the United Kingdom-based NGO ActionAid, which actively lobbied at PrepCom IV.

Rio Declaration

Principle 12

States should co-operate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, to better address the problems of environmental degradation. Trade policy measures for environmental purposes should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade. Unilateral actions to deal with environmental challenges outside the jurisdiction of the importing country should be avoided. Environmental measures addressing transboundary or global environmental problems should, as far as possible, be based on an international consensus.

David McLimans

United Nations backgrounders on UNCED

Perspective on Earth Summit
(15-minute radio programmes)
Contact: Project Manager, UNCED Information Programme, Room S-845, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, United States. Fax (212) 963-4556.

* * *

Notes for Speakers
A primer to assist those giving public addresses on subjects related to environment and development. Available in English, Arabic, French and Spanish.

Student Leaflet on Environment and Development
Contact: Public Inquiries, Room GA-057, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, United States. Fax (212) 963-4642.

* * *

UN in Action
(10 episodes on a 30-minute tape)
Video Backgrounders on Environment and Development
A Third World Perspective on Sustainable Development
(promotional "spots" for television)
Contact: Distribution Officer, Room S-805A, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, United States. Fax (212) 963-4642. Prices available on request; loans arranged free of charge.

* * *

About the United Nations: Environment and Development
(video)
Illustrated Teaching Guide about Environment and Development
The 20-minute documentary presents two stories—one in Thailand and one in the Baltic Sea. The accompanying guide provides material on environment and development issues that will be of assistance to teachers.
Contact: Sales, Room DC2-853, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, United States. Tel. (1-800) 253-9646; fax (212) 963-4116. Video and guide: $29.95. If purchased separately, the video is $25.00; the guide is $9.95.

Mandate for the United Nations: Help implement Agenda 21

There are high expectations that the Earth Summit is going to answer questions that give structure to the UNCED follow-up. Which institutional arrangements will best serve the hoped-for outcome of UNCED and the demands of the future? Will far-reaching reforms of the entire United Nations structure be required? Should further institutions in the field of environment be created?

As UNCED director Jean-Claude Faby indicates in his interview on page one, the United Nations system of organizations will undoubtedly be given a central role in the implementation of the Agenda 21 action plan. That agreement (as it reads after PrepCom IV) specifies that the United Nations "should adopt concrete programmes for the implementation of Agenda 21 and also provide policy guidance for United Nations activities or advice to Governments . . . within their respective areas of competence."

Some sort of ECOSOC-related commission for sustainable development will be set up.

Under the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will undertake the task of directing system-wide coordination and integration of environmental and developmental aspects in the United Nations policies and programmes.

Commission for sustainable development

Some sort of ECOSOC-related commission for sustainable development, assisted by a strong secretariat, is expected to be set up. Meeting the need for an effective cross-sectoral inter-governmental body, the commission will perform the role of coordinating and facilitating intergovernmental action.

Robin Jareaux

Given the pressure from many Northern governments that new institutional mechanisms created for Agenda 21 and new money be kept at a minimum, it is logical that the work be carried out by the existing and highly experienced network of United Nations organizations, albeit with new mandates, increased coordination and reorganization to avoid duplication. But as the global environmental crisis unfolds and the pressures it places on developing countries become more apparent, there is no doubt that substantial new funds are going to be required.

Given the narrow coordination role of the commission for sustainable development, it follows that much of the substantive work and programming will be carried out by organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), to name a few.

While all of these specialized agencies and organizations have long been in the forefront of development activities, environmental concerns, with the exception of agencies like UNEP, FAO and IFAD, have been incorporated as an obligatory component of their programmes only in recent years. The UNCED process itself has helped strengthen links between environment and development throughout the system.

Environment programme

Agenda 21 specifically calls for UNEP, the system's principal body in the field of environment, to enhance its role in environmental monitoring, research, education and development of international environmental law. UNEP has been instrumental in the rapid progress on agreements such as the Montreal Protocol (on ozone depletion) and the Basel Convention (on the international movement and disposal of hazardous wastes), and is closely involved in working out the conventions on climate change and biodiversity which may be ready for Rio. As the environmental conscience of the United Nations, it is seen as the primary source of policy leadership and its capacity for setting standards, tracking compliance and forging international agreements will require increased resources.

Development programme

Similarly, Agenda 21 is expected to call for greater involvement of UNDP and its worldwide network of field offices by making it the lead agency in United Nations efforts towards capacity-building at local, national and regional levels. It is also expected to mobilize donor resources on behalf of recipient governments and to strengthen national coordination mechanisms to increase national capacities for sustainable development. UNDP presently allocates about $600 million annually to environment-related development projects at the grass-roots level.

Both UNEP and UNDP have joined the World Bank in creating the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which is expected to be a major funding vehicle (at least $1.3 billion over the next three years) to finance sustainable development projects dealing with global warming, loss of biological diversity, pollution of international waters and ozone depletion. GEF joins the World Bank concessional affiliate, the International Development Agency, which is stepping up its environment-related interest-free loans to poorer developing countries. More funding vehicles are being considered.

UNDP and UNEP are also requested to help strengthen the United Nations Sahelian Office in its advisory role in combating drought and desertification and in land resource management in Africa. One aim is to make its expertise on these problems available to countries with similar problems in other regions. ■

Rio Declaration

Principle 13

States shall develop national law regarding liability and compensation for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage. States shall also co-operate in an expeditious and more determined manner to develop further international law regarding liability and compensation for adverse effects of environmental damage caused by activities within their jurisdiction or control to areas beyond their jurisdiction.

Principle 14

States should effectively co-operate to discourage or prevent the relocation and transfer to other states of any activities and substances that cause severe environmental degradation or are found to be harmful to human health.

Global perspectives

A series of United Nations reports, all released within the past few months, provide an overview of the state of global environment and development. Taken together, these reports also sketch a comprehensive picture of what policies and programmes the United Nations is prepared to implement to promote sustainable development.

The UNDP *Human Development Report 1992*. Available from Oxford University Press, attention Order Department, 2001 Evans Road, Cary, NC 27513; tel. (800) 451-7556; $16.95.

The World Bank's *World Development Report 1992: Development and the Environment*. Available from World Bank Publications, P.O. Box 7247-8619, Philadelphia, PA 19170-8619; tel. (908) 225-2165; $16.95.

UNEP's *State of the Environment Report 1972-1992: Saving our Planet, Challenges and Hopes*. Available from UNEP, P.O. Box 30552, Nairobi, Kenya; tel. (254) (2) 333930. Symbol No. UNEP/GCSS.III/2.

UNFPA's *State of the World's Population: A World in Balance*. Available from UNFPA, Information and External Relations Division, 220 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017; tel. (212) 297-5026. Free of charge.

World Economic Survey 1991/1992, published by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Development. Available from the United Nations Sales Publications, Room DC2-853, 2 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017; tel. (212) 963-8302; $17.95.

Our Planet, Our Health: Report of the WHO Commission on Health and the Environment. The abbreviated version (WHO/EHE/92.1) is available from: WHO Environmental Health, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland

Meteorology and Hydrology for Sustainable Development by J.P. Bruce. Available from WMO, 41 avenue Guiseppe-Motta, Geneva, Switzerland

Harmonizing trade and environment is tricky business

By Patrice Robineau

From its very first chapter, Agenda 21, the Earth Summit's action plan, emphasizes the role of international economic co-operation in accelerating sustainable development. Environmental protection requires the creation of a "virtuous circle", in which economic growth at the national and international levels generates sufficient funds for investment in the sound management of natural resources, which in turn provides the basis for sustainable growth.

Environmental laws and regulations aimed at saving energy, fighting pollution and promoting ecologically sound products and production processes may involve additional costs. Some measures may be economic, like tax exemptions on investments using non-polluting technologies or direct taxes on energy consumption or pollution.

However, in the short and medium term, there is a danger that certain environmental measures will put a brake on economic growth, a consequence which is a serious problem for developing countries. The impact of the environmental measures on international trade, for example, may result in appreciable discrepancies in costs, and therefore in competitiveness, if countries adopt them unilaterally. For this reason, and to avoid distorting global competitiveness, certain forms of harmonization must be undertaken.

The harmonization of standards at the regional and international levels is needed but should be carefully designed to ensure that it does not hinder trade in developing countries by increasing the cost of their imports or by reducing their significant comparative advantage through the imposition of penalties on their exports.

In this respect it would be wise to accept a degree of flexibility in enforcing the environmental standards applied, depending on the ecological conditions and level of development of different countries. When fairly rigorous standards appear to be necessary at the international level to deal with global environmental problems, developing countries must have access to broad technological and financial aid in order to be able to conform to these standards.

Products from a growing number of countries may be subject to increasingly strict environmental standards. These standards may become non-tariff barriers which, in effect, would bar these exports to countries, sometimes arbitrarily. If such barriers increase unilaterally, there is a danger that they will give rise to disguised forms of protectionism and result in the proliferation of trade conflicts. One example is the case of tuna fish imports, mainly from Mexico, which were restricted by the United States on the grounds of unacceptable fishing methods. A panel of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade subsequently indicated that the restriction was actually a disguised form of protectionism.

It is therefore essential that the international community acquire the means to forestall these hindrances by agreeing on a package of rules and principles designed to govern environment-related trade measures.

Such measures must be applied wisely and, to the extent possible, must fit within the framework of international agreements that enjoy broad acceptance on environmental matters. As well, the need for these measures must be firmly established as to the ecological risk incurred or damage caused, as well as their effectiveness in remedying the problem. Often, encouraging and supporting good management policies—for example in preserving forests or protecting endangered species—can prove to be more effective than trade restrictions.

Finally, the principle of non-discrimination in trade matters must be applied to the environment. We must ensure that minor differences in ecological characteristics of agricultural products, for example, are not used as a pretext for imposing non-tariff trade barriers to favour local production in developed countries over imported products from developing countries.

Generally speaking, it is important for the international community to provide appropriate incentive to developing countries so that they can participate in the international policies which deal with the fundamental causes of global environmental problems. To facilitate this, it may be necessary to provide periods of transition for them, along with effective technological and financial co-operation, in order to help them eventually to meet the standards that have been agreed to at the international level. ■

Rio Declaration

Principle 17

Environmental impact assessment, as a national instrument, shall be undertaken for proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment and are subject to a decision of a competent national authority.

Principle 18

States shall immediately notify other states of any natural disasters or other emergencies that are likely to produce sudden harmful effects on the environment of those states. Every effort shall be made by the international community to help states so afflicted.

Patrice Robineau is special assistant to the deputy secretary-general of UNCTAD.

Sustaining biodiversity

Continued from page 11

traditional lifestyles, that must be sustained if biodiversity is to be maintained.

Critics argue that if companies are to be paid for their work, so should the people who developed the plant species that the companies are now working on to improve further.

In the biodiversity convention discussions as well as in several other areas of discussions within UNCED, countries are fighting over whether there should be some form of payment for these farmers to continue their work, and whether there should be a link between maintaining biodiversity and the engineering of new strains using biotechnology.

Developing countries say that there is a clear link and that if developed countries want them to pay for new varieties that they have bred they should pay for the original species that came from their countries or at least pay to preserve the healthiness of this stock.

Daniel Querol, a biochemist and adviser to the Nicaraguan government, says that developing countries should have some compensation. "Almost all plants of economic importance for the 'First World' have come at no cost from developing countries," he explains. FAO estimates that over 90 per cent of the world's genetic resources are based in these countries today.

Developing countries are in danger now of having to pay out even more without any compensation as biotechnologists in the West are breeding yet more productive plants that will be crucial for raising crop productivity.

One innovative plan to pay for the efforts of farmers and agronomists in the South to protect biodiversity is a fund that the 150 members of FAO agreed to set up last November. It could be implemented as soon as the international convention on the conservation of biodiversity is successfully negotiated.

In principle, the FAO international fund will collect money from the users of the plants, such as the seed companies, to pay into a global system. This fund would in turn be used to finance local efforts to preserve plant species for the use of humanity, according to José Esquinas-Alcazar, the secretary of FAO's Commission on Plant Genetic Resources.

For example, several Northern governments are very keen to promote private biotechnology industries and have recently relaxed rules on developing new strains to spur growth in this field.

At the same time they jealously guard the "intellectual property rights" of companies that develop new strains and their rights to profits from their research and development as well as those of researchers who go into the jungles to discover new plants with medicinal or food value.

But Querol stresses that the issue is not one of ownership. "To think that the genes belonged to those who identify them would be the equivalent of saying that radium belongs to the Curie family because they isolated it."

This concept is fundamental. The species must be protected and used for humanity, not simply for commercial gain, although research and preservation work must be paid for.

The FAO proposal for a global fund would pay for the preservation and return of this healthy stock to all farmers, regardless of the wealth—or poverty—of the biodiversity of their particular region.

The discussions on the biodiversity convention will be continued at a special intergovernmental meeting in Nairobi in May and, hopefully, will be ready for heads of government to sign in Rio. ■

Pratap Chatterjee is a freelance journalist who specializes in scientific and environmental issues.

Rio Declaration

Principle 15

In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by states according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

Principle 16

National authorities should endeavour to promote the internalization of environmental costs and the use of economic instruments, taking into account the approach that the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution, with due regard to the public interest and without distorting international trade and investment.

United Nations backgrounders on UNCED

The United Nations Department of Public Information has prepared **Earth Summit in Focus**—background articles on issues before the Summit. All are available, at no cost, in English, French and Spanish; some are available in Portuguese.

No. 1	The '92 Process: The UN Prepares for Rio
No. 2	Trekking to the Summit
No. 3	Transferring Environmentally Sound Technology
No. 4	Sustaining Life in the Oceans
No. 5	Saving the Forests: Forging a Global Compact
No. 6	Population: Balancing the Global Equation
No. 7	Protecting the Diversity of Species on the Planet
No. 8	The Business of Sustainable Development
No. 9	Global Climate Change: The Need for Clean Energy
No. 10	Ozone and Acid Rain: Cleaning up Industry and Transportation.

Contact: Project Manager, UNCED Information Programme, Room S-845, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, United States. Fax (212) 963-4556.

View from the South

We can no longer subsidize the North

By Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain

Humanity never needed a global social contract more than it does now, but as things stand, our common future is sharply divided between two disparate worlds. Abysmal poverty and hunger coexist with extraordinary wealth and overconsumption; unprecedented knowledge with widespread illiteracy; and incredible technological and military might with abject powerlessness. At the same time, the growing environmental crisis is forcing the citizens of the world to realize that the world is one.

It is ironic that those who have exploited global resources the most are now preaching to those who have been largely frugal and sparing.

Unfortunately, the global environmental governance system and the new ecological order that are emerging through the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) attempt to ignore the significance of these two worlds with their very different priorities.

In recent years, the governments and people of the North have exerted strenuous efforts to bring about better global management of the world's resources, including the Montreal Protocol to protect the ozone layer and now the proposed conventions on climate change, biodiversity and, eventually, tropical forests.

Levers of power

As international trade, aid and debt are becoming green-linked, the Northern investors and bankers increasingly demand that their dollars and yen be spent in the South only in a way that secures our "common future".

Rio Declaration

Principle 19

States shall provide prior and timely notification and relevant information to potentially affected states on activities that may have a significant adverse transboundary environmental effect and shall consult with those states at an early stage and in good faith.

Principle 20

Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.

Principle 21

The creativity, ideals and courage of the youth of the world should be mobilized to forge a global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and ensure a better future for all.

Daniele Melani

Environmental management is thus being thrust upon the developing world using the existing levers of power available with industrialized countries. There is no effort to create new levers of power that would allow all citizens of the world to participate in global environmental management.

Today, the reality is that Northern governments and institutions can, using their economic and political power, intervene in, say, the development of Bangladesh. But no Bangladeshi can intervene in the development processes of Northern economies even if global warming caused largely by Northern emissions might submerge half the country.

Even worse, the new green twists and turns in international decision-making are being made with claims to a new morality of global environmental solidarity. This must be the biggest irony in human history; those who have been the most immoral in environmental terms are now preaching to those who have been largely frugal and sparing. It is obvious that this moralizing must stop and be replaced by honest and straightforward actions by the North.

The agenda before the Earth Summit is largely Northern-oriented and intensely political. It makes no more than a token attempt to deal with the issues of survival and the financial and economic space that the struggling millions of the developing world desperately need.

The Northern agenda, firstly, sectoralizes environmental issues to separate them from the global economic and cultural processes that lie at their heart—addressing only the symptoms and not the causes. It refuses any serious discussion on the restructuring of international economic relations, even to the extent that they relate to environmental resources in the hands of the rich, the very same people and institutions which have been most responsible for global environmental havoc.

Sharing the burden

While the Montreal Protocol and the proposed climate treaty, for example, call for sharing the burden of technological change to repair the global environment, they shy away from talking about an equal sharing of the resource, our common atmosphere, among all citizens of the world.

If all citizens of the world have to manage the planet Earth as equal partners, then the global environmental agenda itself must be changed. It will have to recognize, firstly, that for developing countries the environmental challenge is how to use the resources of the environment, often at far higher rates of productivity than at the moment, but in a sustainable manner. In the South, for instance, forests are not wilderness areas but habitats for the poorest of its poor.

Terms of trade

Secondly, in the South, environmental degradation is strongly related to the global processes of trade and economic relations. The world market system fixes product prices in a way that increasingly allows the North to capture the ecological costs of production and build it into its pricing structure.

Enormous investments have been made by Northern countries in pollution control, and all consumers of Northern products across the world now pay the cost of those investments. But the developing world is not being allowed to recover the ecological costs of its production because it cannot raise prices as needed. The terms of trade of its various mineral and biomass products—tea, coffee, cocoa, bananas, pineapples, peanuts and prawns—have been steadily declining even though they are produced at increasing cost to the environment. How can developing countries make an investment in their future if even the prospects for today are uncertain?

The South has consistently subsidized the gargantuan consumption of the North. A reform of the world economic system is therefore vital so that all citizens of the world, including the world's poor, are empowered to take control of their environment while the rich are made to pay the real ecological costs of their consumption.

Space to grow

Thirdly, the South needs ecological space to grow, space which has already been colonized by the North. The poor are not using even a small fraction of their legitimate share of the global commons like the atmosphere, thus permitting the North over the last century to pollute at little cost and to build up its economy and industrial base extremely cheaply and rapidly.

Has anybody calculated the carbon dioxide cost of an individual's plane trip from New York to Chicago? Each flight would exceed a Thai or Bangladeshi farmer's legitimate share of annual emissions tens of times.

Fourthly, the South provides all kinds of seeds, herbs and other resources for genetic variability, including traditional knowledge about their uses, which have transformed the world's pharmaceutical and food industry. The North pays nothing to the South in return for these biological resources and knowledge, while most technical knowledge emanating from private and corporate sources in the North is protected by patents and has strong financial value.

Since the economic levers of power in the world—aid, trade and debt—lie largely with the North, it is its moral responsibility to provide a lead that gives confidence to the South. The North must indicate its willingness to deal with basic issues that force the South to abuse the Earth. And, most importantly, it must stop preaching. Does anybody seriously believe that the Earth can support everybody at the consumption level of a European or a North American? Way back in 1908, India's Mahatma Gandhi asked, "If it took Britain the exploitation of half the globe to be what it is today, how many globes would India need?"

The South also has a lesson to learn. While telling the North bluntly that it is the Southern peoples' lifestyles and cultures that have kept the world's ecological fabric intact, it must also renounce a growth of the Northern consumptive lifestyle in the South. It must get rid of poverty, but it must also stand for the integration, in its modern living, of the ecological prudence of its traditional lifestyles. The South must go to UNCED not only to learn but also to teach. Nor must it go to beg. UNCED is a forum to which it must go to demand a fair and rightful space in the lap of Mother Earth. ■

Rio Declaration

Principle 22

Indigenous people and their communities, and other local communities, have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development.

Principle 23

The environment and natural resources of people under oppression, domination and occupation shall be protected.

Anil Agarwal is director and Sunita Narain is associate director of the Centre for Science and Environment, an NGO in New Delhi, India.

The threat of success

Dear Editor,

I don't know who leaked the attached memo, but it may interest the readers of Development Forum.

Yours sincerely,
James Robertson

Your Satanic Highness,

I have the honour to report an event which threatens our plan for the humans to destroy the Enemy's creation —of which they themselves are part.

They are now discussing their "common future" at an "Earth Summit". This unprecedented meeting comes precisely 500 years after the modern era began—I refer, of course, to Columbus' famous voyage. It could mark the start of a new era, and a new more sustainable and equitable direction of human development and progress.

How should we assess this threat? There are, I shall suggest, three possibilities.

If it were to succeed, the Earth Summit would have to achieve a compact along the following lines.

* The rich countries of the so-called "First World", led by the Group of Seven, would have to commit themselves to the new direction of progress. This would concentrate on improving their people's quality of life while reducing their per capita ecological impact to a level sustainable by an eventual world population of, say, 10 billion people. It would, for example, call for a cut of more than four fifths in present per capita energy consumption over the next 20 years.

* The formerly "socialist" and the "less developed" countries of the Second and Third Worlds would have to accept that they can never attain today's First World per capita levels of material throughput, pollution and waste. They too would have to commit themselves to the new, post-Euroamerican, people-centred, ecologically sustainable path of development—often including population stabilization policies and an enhanced development role for women.

* In their own self-interest, First World countries would have to commit themselves to effective technical and financial support for sustainable development in the Second and Third Worlds, recognizing that ecological destruction there damages the global ecosystems on which their own future depends.

* They would also have to recognize their huge development debt to Third World countries, arising from the damage the First World has done both to the global environment and to the development prospects of other peoples over the last few hundred years. They would have to agree to write off the outstanding financial debts of the Third World as part of the new global compact for sustainable development.

* Agreement would also be needed to restructure the United Nations system, to:

  (1) set up regular annual procedures for negotiating, monitoring and reporting progress on national and global policies for sustainable development;

  (2) bring world economic institutions—notably the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)—within that policy framework, together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), under the democratic supervision of the United Nations General Assembly; and

  (3) involve representatives of citizens (non-governmental organizations, or NGOs) as well as governments in the further democratization of these and other United Nations procedures.

* Finally, the Earth Summit would have to question prevailing economic orthodoxies, such as:

  (1) the desirability of conventionally measured economic growth;

  (2) the assumption that conventional free-market capitalism is the only feasible alternative to state socialism, and

  (3) the assumption that conventional free trade is the only alternative to old-fashioned protectionism.

The first of the three possibilities is that the Earth Summit will be a resounding success, leading to the effective implementation of a global compact on these lines. That is the worst-case scenario from our point of view. Fortunately, it is also the least probable. First World governments and multinational business lack the vision to treat the recent collapse of the socialist economies not as "the end of history"—which gives conventional capitalism a free run into the future—but as the first phase in a larger process of global transformation.

David McLimans

Another, rather more probable, scenario is that the Earth Summit will be a resounding failure. But, again, it is not in our interest to have the incapacity of today's official world leadership too clearly exposed. Too many people are already aware that human hopes for the future lie with the worldwide network of citizens' movements and NGOs which has coalesced around the Earth Summit and challenged today's established power structures.

The most probable scenario, and the best one for us, is that the Earth Summit will be a cosmetic success—a spate of fine words and ideas without the political will or practical means to implement them, which will lull the world into thinking that all necessary action is in hand. I and my colleagues here will continue to work for this outcome, with the willing help of many of the humans involved.

'The worst-case scenario is that the Earth Summit is a resounding success, leading to the effective implementation of a global compact.'

I will report further developments in due course. Meanwhile, I have the honour to remain your Satanic Highness' Intelligence Co-ordinator on Planet Earth.

B.L.Z. Bubb

James Robertson's latest book is Future Wealth: A New Economics for the 21st Century, *(Cassel, London; Bootstrap Press, New York).*

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Natural allies: African women and the environment

By Aminata Traoré

The duo "women and the environment" asserted itself in the UNCED PrepComs as an essential and undeniable factor in the "sustainable development" frameworks being negotiated for the Earth Summit. It appears that the cause of women, all women, will be heard in Rio de Janeiro in June. But what can African women expect to gain from the Conference on Environment and Development?

We have the dubious privilege of living in the region of the world which, some predict, will contain the majority of the world's poor in the year 2000 if current macroeconomic and demographic trends continue.

Yet, African women do hold some trump cards, notably our central role in natural resource management and environmental protection, despite generally being viewed as "poor, pregnant and illiterate", excluded from decision-making circles, and accused, more or less openly, of degrading the environment through our high birth rate.

Ironically, it is in part because of their marginal position in modern production and monetary systems that many African women from rural and poor urban areas have been able to preserve a culture and daily activities which respect the environment. We urgently need to recognize the strategic importance of those environmental practices that allow hundreds of millions of women and their communities to survive in extremely fragile ecosystems.

Richard B. Mock

Ecologically sensitive

The vast majority of African women treat natural resources respectfully and manage them sparingly, if only because, in the absence of appropriate technologies, they pay dearly in time and energy for farming and gathering, transporting, conserving and managing these natural resources. These are seen in scores of small ways in the course of a typical day. Women will reuse, for example, the same water for different chores: the soapy water used to wash clothes will be reused to wash dishes, which are then rinsed in clean water.

Women, who play the leading role in subsistence agriculture, also take every precaution to minimize waste. In grain-producing regions, for example, all parts of millet—stray grains, the chaff, the bran, the water used to rinse it, even the twigs remaining at the bottom of the pot after cooking—are recovered and recycled for consumption by people or animals.

Such efficient methods of managing food and domestically-used water do not arise solely from economic necessity; they reflect an approach to the environment and to natural resources that is founded on cultural and socio-religious beliefs. In most areas, natural resource management is a collective and co-operative effort; sharing and co-operation remain prized values in most African societies.

Unfortunately, development professionals in Africa often disregard the specifics of the population's lifestyle and beliefs when these should be the real basis of their educational and informational programmes. The "specialists" tend to lay down rules of behaviour for all humanity which fall far short of meeting the pressing needs of specific societies.

For example, it is inappropriate, unfair and even dangerous systematically to impose a price on domestically-used water in regions where water is in scant supply, a policy that is receiving increasing support from international development organizations. In dry regions, communities have already created innovative resource strategies which conform to their ecological realities. These populations, at the limit of survival, have absolutely no need of such a measure to understand the value of water better.

African women do hold some trump cards, notably our central role in natural resource management and environmental protection.

Because peoples of the South have always made the environment their principal ally, it is especially easy for them to meet the current demands of sustainable development, unlike richer societies where these demands mean renouncing common luxuries.

In this context, women of the Third World, especially African women, who play such a vital role in managing essential goods, could reverse the dependent, export-oriented trends of their countries' economies. But we must trust African women, and involve them more in identifying problems and finding solutions.

Sub-Saharan Africa should quickly explore and incorporate the vast practical knowledge of the marginal populations, especially of women, who already practice sound and sustainable environmental management. It is no accident that issues like sustainability, human development and popular participation are commanding so much of the policy-makers' and development experts' attention. We must insist that the post-Rio policies reflect these understandings. ■

Aminata Traoré, a national of Mali, is a social science researcher and co-ordinator of PROWESS/AFRIQUE, a United Nations Development Programme initiative in the Ivory Coast promoting the role of women in water and environmental sanitation services.

Rio Declaration

Principle 24

Warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development. States shall therefore respect international law providing protection for the environment in times of armed conflict and co-operate in its further development, as necessary.

Principle 25

Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible.

People's Agenda 21

Continued from page 8

to stand on as they interact with delegations in the intergovernmental negotiating sessions relating to environment and development in the future.

NGO learning curve

The groups that had the most influence in the actual texts of the negotiations were those that were most single-minded in pursuing their group's agenda.

The successes of the tireless NGO representatives in the Women's Caucus were able to ensure that their agenda would be "mainstreamed" into all sections of the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, not just in the areas that highlighted women—such as in the section on "major groups". The local and national political experience of such NGO leaders as Nigeria's Chief Bisi Ogunleye and Bella Abzug of WEDO was extremely useful to the Women's Caucus in the halls and corridors of the Preparatory Committee's negotiations, where the real work of any conference is done.

The Sustainable Agriculture Working Group has been following its issues through a number of United Nations negotiating processes and several United Nations specialized agencies for the next several years. For example, they have had input into the former United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations' code of conduct as well as a proposed code of conduct on pesticides that is under consideration by the Food and Agriculture Organization, and have participated in the various NGO working committees, such as those of United Nations bodies like the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

The Sustainable Agriculture Working Group was successful in assuring that a structure for a "Sustainable Agricultural Network" would be set up in Agenda 21 under the chapter on sustainable agriculture to share research, successful case studies and useful strategies on implementing programmes that will ensure sustainable agriculture in both the North and the South. The Network would have staff and include NGO as well as government representation. According to Sustainable Agricultural Working Group co-convenor Tom Forster, "our international members from every region of the world are in this work for the long haul, so the life of the working group will extend long past the Earth Summit."

The high cost of sending delegates to Rio for two weeks means that many NGO representatives see the work they can accomplish through the treaties and networking with their colleagues as a long-term investment. The follow-up on Agenda 21 for the NGO community will have relevance in each of the upcoming United Nations conferences—on human rights in 1993 and on women in 1995—and in the plans for restructuring the United Nations in the same year. For NGOs, the Earth Summit is only the beginning in a "long road from Rio."

M.M.

Rio Declaration

Principle 26

States shall resolve all their environmental disputes peacefully and by appropriate means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Principle 27

States and people shall co-operate in good faith and in a spirit of partnership in the fulfilment of the principles embodied in this Declaration and in the further development of international law in the field of sustainable development.

Biodiversity

Global Biodiversity Strategy: Guidelines for Action to Save, Study, and Use Earth's Biotic Wealth Sustainably and Equitably.
World Resources Institute Publications, P.O. Box 4852, Hampden Station, Baltimore, MD 21211, United States. $19.95 (pbk).

As the extinction of plant and animal species proceeds at an alarming rate, an international team of experts has devised a new approach to safeguarding Earth's biological wealth while providing a way for species-rich countries to benefit from their genetic wealth.

An initiative involving scientists, government officials, representatives of NGOs, business people, and local and tribal leaders on nearly every continent, this report differs dramatically from today's typical ad hoc piecemeal reaction to environmental crises.

The *Strategy* outlines a systematic agenda of policies and actions that can be adopted at local, national and international levels. With 85 specific recommendations, it sets forth a conservation blueprint that protects biodiversity over the long term while mobilizing its benefits for food, medicines, chemicals and other necessities.

The book was produced by the World Resources Institute, the World Conservation Union and the United Nations Environment Programme.

Biodiversity: Social & Ecological Perspectives.
Vandana Shiva et al.
Zed Books Ltd., 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BU, United Kingdom, and 171 First Ave., Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716, United States.

This collection of essays from the World Rainforest Movement (WRM) is a critique of a study entitled *Conserving the World's Biological Diversity* published by the World Resources Institute, the World Bank, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, and the Worldwide Fund for Nature.

The contributors say that while the crisis of biodiversity erosion is focused as an exclusively tropical and Third World phenomenon, the thinking and planning of biodiversity conservation is projected as a monopoly of institutes and agencies based in and controlled by the industrial North. "It is as if the mind is in the North, the matter is in the South; the solution is in the North, the problems in the South."

The authors acknowledge that the tropics are the cradle of the planet's biological diversity and that the multiplicity and variability of ecosystems and species that exist there is incomparable. However, they believe that the erosion of diversity is a crisis in the North as much as in the South.

And so, while the loss of biological resources continues through clearing and burning of forests, overharvesting of plants and animals, and indiscriminate use of pesticides, the authors say, the deliberate substitution of diversity by uniformity of crops, trees and livestock—through development projects financed by international agencies—has worsened the biodiversity crisis.

Heffa Schücking and Patrick Anderson analyse the dominant paradigm of conservation; Andrew Gray writes of his experience with indigenous peoples of Latin America; Larry Lohmann's article reflects the conservation strategies of the peasant and forest-dwelling communities in the case of Thailand; and Vandana Shiva attempts to show that production based on principles of uniformity is the biggest threat to biodiversity.

Economics

The Gaia Atlas of Green Economics: Wealth Beyond Measure.
Paul Ekins, Mayer Hillman and Robert Hutchinson.
Anchor Books, 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10017, United States. $16.00.

Every day, all over the world, billions of people play their part in humanity's global economy. Material wealth is now the principal virtue of our society, and economics is the religion that guides and advises our actions. We now find ourselves trading the tropical forests for hamburgers, the ozone layer for underarm deodorants, and our communities for freeways and the free market.

This third volume in the Gaia Future Series reveals the hidden costs of many "profitable enterprises" and the sacrifices people make to satisfy the market. It describes and illustrates the effect of traditional economics on our planet. Through colour maps, photos and graphs, it shows how we can implement a new form of economics. It is for all those who are concerned about our impact on each other and the planet, and who want to make positive, responsible choices for a greener, cleaner world.

Future Wealth: A New Economics for the 21st Century.
James Robertson.
Cassell, London. 1990. £16.95 (hbk), £6.95 (pbk).

According to the author, the twenty-first century economy must be enabling (for people) and conserving (for the Earth), not dependency-creating and environmentally destructive as now. It must be a multilevel, one-world system.

This book is about the nature of this transformation and how to make it happen; what it will mean for people and households, places and local economies, nations and the international economy, and how larger units such as continental groupings can systematically enable the smaller units within them to be more self-reliant and conserving.

It outlines changes in the money system, including taxes, incomes and capital, currencies, interest and debt, to encourage efficient, fair and conserving economic relations; and a programme for reorienting the real economy—including work, technology and industry, food, agriculture, transport, housing, planning and health.

The last chapter puts forward an agenda for the 1990s, with stages in 1992 and 1995.

Water

The Worth of Water: Technical Briefs on Health, Water and Sanitation.
Introduction by John Pickford.
Intermediate Technology Development Group of North America, Inc., 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, United States. $17.00.

This collection brings together a series of short and highly illustrated introductions to the main technologies and processes in the field of village and community level water and sanitation. Developed and tested over the years, the 32 "appropriate technologies" described here range from household water storage to public standposts, from making soap to eye and skin diseases.

Each brief concludes with an indication of where to go for more information, and professor Pickford of Loughborough University sets the scene for programme and project workers who will find this "ideas tank" invaluable.

Originally published individually in *Waterlines*, the world's only magazine devoted entirely to low-cost water and sanitation, this consolidated publication brings together a body of practical information and guidance which appropriately marks the end of the Water Decade and the start of the "Health for All by 2000" campaign.

Women

Women, Poverty and Environment in Latin America.
Michael Paolisso and Sally W. Yudelman.
International Center for Research on Women, Suite 302, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. 20036, United States. English and Spanish. $6.00. Postage and handling: domestic—$2.00 for first three publications, $.50 each additional; international—$3.50; $.75.

This report explores the ways in which women in the region contribute to protecting natural resources and the environment. It identifies how local organizations are supporting women's environmental efforts and offers specific recommendations for donor support in solving the dual problems of persistent poverty and environmental degradation in Latin America by enhancing women's environmental roles.

World Bank

The World Bank and the Environment: A Progress Report, Fiscal 1991.
World Bank Publications, P.O. Box 7247-8619, Philadelphia, PA 19170-8619, United States. $9.95 plus $3.50 for shipping and handling. Order stock no. 11903.

This second annual report describes specific environmental strategies and environmental lending in the Bank's four operational regions: Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe, Middle East, and North Africa. It details progress in pollution, environmental economics, the urban environment, water resources management, energy and the environment, forest and land management, social and cultural aspects, and the global environment.

A chapter devoted to tropical forests studies ways in which the Bank is dealing with deforestation as a part of the continual review of its forest policies. It reflects a shift in Bank emphasis from commercial ventures to conservation measures.

The book reports on other Bank initiatives taken during fiscal 1991, including the launching of the Global Environment Facility, a pilot programme to oversee efforts to reduce global warming, preserve biological diversity, protect international waters, and prevent depletion of the ozone layer. It also looks at the implementation of the Montreal Protocol, under which participants have agreed to phase out their use of ozone-destroying CFCs.

The report includes data on how environmental issues are being addressed more systematically through the environmental work programme of the International Finance Corporation, the Bank affiliate that supports private enterprise, and shows how the Bank works with the international community.

Development

For Earth's Sake: A Report from the Commission on Developing Countries and Global Change.
International Development Research Centre, Marketing and Distribution Unit (ESI), P.O. Box 8500, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1G 3H9. $14.95. Available in June 1992.

The world's environmental agenda is preoccupied with issues involving long-term, planetary-level biophysical change. In many Third World countries, however, environmental issues are not

theoretical or long-term enigmas. Resource degradation, pollution, contamination, toxicity and natural disasters are immediate issues of life and death. And these issues are not local or parochial; they are often tied to international political and economic relationships. They are global problems demanding global resolution.

For Earth's Sake explores the interrelationships of all these issues—environmental, social and developmental. Part I provides a Southern perspective on the global environment/development crisis and on the global and national causes of this crisis. The elements of an equitable approach to sustainability are proposed, forming the foundation of a research agenda.

Part II looks at the roles, problems and potential of social research in relation to environment/development issues, including challenges specific to the Third World. Part III presents the research agenda itself, addressing both the basic principles to guide environment/development research as well as the institutional and training requirements that would emerge from the identified research needs.

The Commission on Developing Countries and Global Change, funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre and the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries, is intended to provide an unrestricted forum for Third World perspectives and recommendations for a research agenda on the global environmental crisis.

Resources

World Resources 1992-93.
World Resources Institute Publications, P.O. Box 4852, Hampden Station, Baltimore, Maryland, 21211 United States. $19.95 plus $3.00 shipping and handling.

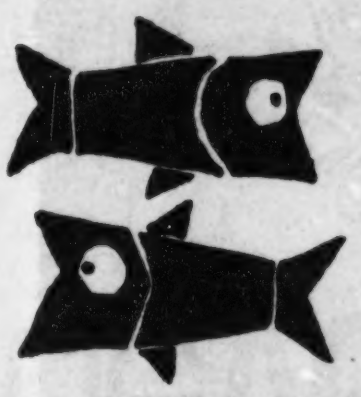
World Resources 1992-93 is published by the World Resources Institute (WRI) in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The latest edition has information on 146 countries. It will be available in English, Spanish, Arabic, German, Japanese, Chinese, French and Dutch. A teacher's guide is also available to make the information accessible in the classroom.

"The publication of *World Resources 1992-93* marks the fifth volume in this invaluable series. With world-wide distribution exceeding 100,000 copies in eight languages, the *World Resources* series has helped to bring awareness of

conditions and trends in the global environment to a wide-spread audience," says UNEP's executive director, Mostafa K. Tolba. "In reporting and analysing these trends and underscoring the actions that must be taken to reverse them, *World Resources 1992-93* bears a message of overriding importance for decision-makers."

World Resources is the most complete and up-to-date reference work of its kind, showing conditions and trends in the Earth's physical environment. It provides the latest information on global population, climate, energy use, land, wildlife, agriculture, forests, water resources and other key environmental indicators.

A special report in *World Resources 1992-93* that looks broadly at global development patterns shows vividly



that despite a surge of world economic growth and notable social progress by many developing countries in recent decades, the economic gap between rich and poor countries widened and poverty worsened.

In the past 20 years, according to data cited, per capita GNP rose significantly in industrial and rapidly industrializing countries, and also increased in low-income countries. None the less, the disparity in incomes between rich and poor has increased. These trends are highlighted in a set of indicators compiled by WRI as a way of measuring progress towards sustainable development.

Education

Teaching about Environment and Development.

Another in a series of educational videos and manuals on topics of international concern, this United Nations publication was designed for upper-primary and secondary school students. It offers information on the theme of environment and development and is easily adaptable to classroom use.

The manual consists of teaching notes, readings and classroom exercises which are suggestive, not prescriptive. Materials can be adapted to suit a particular class.

"Environment and development" is a suitable topic for science, social studies, history, geography, civics, the arts, health and home science.

The manual may be used separately or with an educational video entitled *About the United Nations: Environment and Development*. A list of available United Nations publications, films and videos on the topic appears at the end of the booklet.

To obtain United Nations publications and films on the environment and development, contact your nearest United Nations Information Centre or Service. Or write to Public Inquiries, Room GA-057, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, United States.

Comments and suggestions, as well as accounts of teaching about the United Nations in your school may be sent to: Education Information Programme, Special Programmes Section, Room S-955, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, United States.

Development Education Exchange Papers (DEEP).

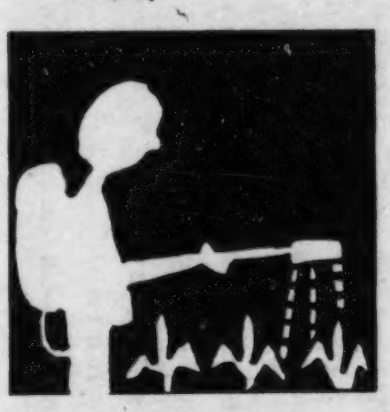
The Development Education Exchange Service is an international network of individuals, groups, institutions, governmental and non-governmental development agencies and units within the United Nations system seeking to share experiences, activities, documentation and information in the field of DevEd, the promotion of people's participation in their own development and in the broader issues of international development.

DEEP is published by the Freedom from Hunger Campaign/Action for Development of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It is issued every two months in English, French and Spanish and contains reviews of selected material from the South and the North.

Also available is the *DEEP Index 1990*, listing the reviews by country, regional and international non-governmental organization, and intergovernmental agency.

Material featured in *DEEP* should be requested direct from the address given at the top of each review. Requests to join the Service and to receive *DEEP*, which is free of charge, should be sent to:

DEEP, Freedom from Hunger Campaign/Action for Development, FAO, Via Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy.



Basic Data on International Courses Offered in the Netherlands 1992/1993.
Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (NUFFIC), Information Department, Badhuisweg 251, P.O. Box 90734, 2509 LS The Hague, The Netherlands.

This booklet lists the 215 courses that are offered in the Netherlands. Topics vary from hydraulic and agricultural sciences to aerial cartography, mineral exploration to ecological agriculture. The courses are intended primarily for people from the Third World.

Each year some 2,500 persons attend these courses, most of them on grants from the Dutch government. Instruction is in English or, in a few cases, French.

NGOs

Environmental Screening of NGO Development Projects.
Canadian Council for International Co-operation, 1 Nicholas St., Suite 300, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 7B7. $32.10.

This environmental screening kit was produced by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC), with funding from the NGO Division of the Canadian International Development Agency, to assist project planners and programme officers to integrate environmental considerations into the development projects of NGOs. Specifically, the kit provides information to screen projects for potential negative environmental impacts.

The illustrated kit, available in English and French, provides technical background information, checklists, annotated bibliographies and lists of international environmental contacts.

The six booklets produced to date cover the following: an introduction; domestic water supply and sanitation; irrigation; small dams and reservoirs; pesticides and integrated pest management; and environmental organizations, networks and contacts.

Still to come are two booklets—on coastal ecosystems, and dryland agriculture—which will be distributed free of charge to those who have purchased the screening kit or have received a complimentary copy.

An annotated bibliography of French reference works is also available free of charge to those who already have the French version of the kit.

CCIC is a coalition of more than 120 Canadian voluntary organizations committed to achieving global development in a peaceful and healthy environment, with social justice, human dignity and participation for all. It publishes newsletters, publications and directories, and organizes training workshops on areas such as the environment and gender.

Settlements

Partnership for a Livable Environment.
Cooperative Housing Foundation, P.O. Box 91280, Washington, DC 20090-1280, United States. $6.00.

This 42-page monograph explores the relationship between the enormous growth of informal urban settlements in developing countries, the daily living practices of settlement residents, and the impact on the environment. It introduces a partnership model that promotes affordable, community-based solutions to detrimental environmental conditions in developing countries. Case examples and photographs illustrate the types of problems that arise and how community-based interventions can be implemented and sustained.

The book presents a model for mobilizing residents of informal settlements —sprawling, haphazard shantytowns with no running water, sewage system or garbage collection—to address some of their own environmental problems. With partners who provide technical, organizational or financial assistance, the residents can learn to identify community priorities, design economical and appropriate interventions and implement and manage projects that improve their living environment.

The World Habitat Awards, 1985-1989.
Building and Social Housing Foundation, Memorial Square, Coalville, Leics. LE6 4EU, United Kingdom. £15.00 plus £1.50 postage and handling.

There is no shortage of housing problems—what is needed are solutions. This book describes 13 highly successful and innovative housing projects which can be replicated worldwide and provides a valuable new guide to innovative and successful housing solutions. Each project is described in detail and amply illustrated with colour photographs.

The solutions are all winners of a World Habitat Award, which is given annually by the Building and Social Housing Foundation in co-operation with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements to projects in both developed and developing countries.

The winning projects featured in this book were selected from India, Turkey, Malawi, United Kingdom, Sri Lanka, United States, Poland, Cyprus, Switzerland, Egypt, Costa Rica, Japan and Venezuela.

Calendar

18th WEDC Conference: Water, Environment and Management.
30 August-3 September 1992, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Organized by the United Kingdom-based Water, Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC) and the Nepal Engineers' Association, the conference offers an opportunity for those dealing with water and other aspects of infrastructure to discuss common problems and learn from the experience of others. It is particularly suitable for those actively involved in planning, providing, operating and maintaining services—those working for voluntary organizations, local and central government departments and international agencies.

For more information, write to Rowena Steele, WEDC, Loughborough University of Technology, Leicestershire LE11 3TU, United Kingdom. Tel: 0 (44) 509-222390; Fax: 0 (44) 509-211079.

Fourth Interamerican Film Festival of Indigenous Peoples.
17-26 June 1992, Lima and Cusco, Peru.

The aim of the festival is to contribute to a critical awareness of the multi-ethnic nature of the Americas—and the cultural, social and political implications of these multiple identities—by providing an alternative space for an intercultural exchange through film presentation and criticism. It is being organized by the Latin American Committee for Film of Indigenous Peoples (CLACPI).

Films and videos to be submitted for participation must deal with the lives and cultures of indigenous peoples of the Americas and related topics, and they must not have been entered in any of the previous CLACPI festivals.

For more information, write to Comisión Organizadora, IV Festival Americano de Cine de los Pueblos Indígenas, Av. Juan de Aliaga 204, Lima 17, Perú, S.A. Tel or Fax: 51 14 617949, 419216.

International Conference on the State of Education and Development: New Directions.
21-25 November 1993, Cairo, Egypt.
Call for papers.

The Association for the Advancement of Policy, Research and Development in the Third World is soliciting proposals for research papers, panels, roundtables and workshops for possible presentation and inclusion in the Cairo Agenda for 1993 on any of the following issues:

Roundtable topics—Africa, Asia and the South Pacific, Caribbean and Latin America, Middle East and the Gulf.

Research topics—education for development vs. development education; science and technology for development; training for manpower development; women in development; computers in development; biotechnology and the world food agenda; culture and human values; health and medicine; global environmental agenda; global strategy for shelter to the year 2000; appropriate technology and technology transfer, among others.

The deadline for submissions is 15 August 1992. Please send proposal plus a biographical statement to:

Mekki Mtewa, Association for the Advancement of Policy, Research and Development in the Third World, P.O. Box 70257, Washington, DC 20024-0257, United States. Tel: (202) 723-7010; Fax: (202) 723-7010.

The seminal importance of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development is clearly reflected in the fact that it is being convened at the level of heads of state and government. But it is perhaps even more important that the conference has already become the focal point for an unprecedented effort of mobilization and organization on the part of literally millions of people around the world.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali,
secretary-general of the
United Nations

We cannot deal with global environmental issues without placing development at the centre of our agenda. We must provide strong support to the developing countries, revitalizing their development process and helping them to eradicate poverty, which is just as much an environmental risk as it is a humanitarian and moral problem. This is imperative if we're going to have a manageable planet and a positive environmental as well as economic future.

Maurice Strong, secretary-
general of the United Nations
Conference on Environment
and Development

un development forum

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United Nations Institute for Training and Research;
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United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees;
UNU
United Nations University;
UNCHS
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements;
UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
WFC
World Food Council;
ICJ
International Court of Justice;
INSTRAW
International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women;
ITC
International Trade Centre;
WFP
World Food Programme;
ILO
International Labour Organisation;
FAO
Food and Agriculture Organization;
UNESCO
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;
ICAO
International Civil Aviation Organization;
WHO
World Health Organization;
IBRD
World Bank;
IMF
International Monetary Fund;
UPU
Universal Postal Union;
ITU
International Telecommunication Union;
WMO
World Meteorological Organization;
IMO
International Maritime Organization;
WIPO
World Intellectual Property Organization;
IFAD
International Fund for Agricultural Development;
UNIDO
United Nations Industrial Development Organization;
IAEA
International Atomic Energy Agency;
GATT
General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

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